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CRAGS.

BY ALICE CARY.

There was a good and reverend man
Whose day of life, serene and bright,
Was wearing hard upon the gloom
Beyond which we can see no light.

And as his vision back to morn,
And forward to the evening sped,
He bowed himself upon his staff,
And with his heart communing, said:

From mystery on to mystery
My way has been; yet as I near
The eternal shore, against the sky
These crags of truth stand sharp and clear.

Where'er its hidden fountain be,
Time is a many-colored jet
Of good and evil, light and shade,
And we evoke the things we get.

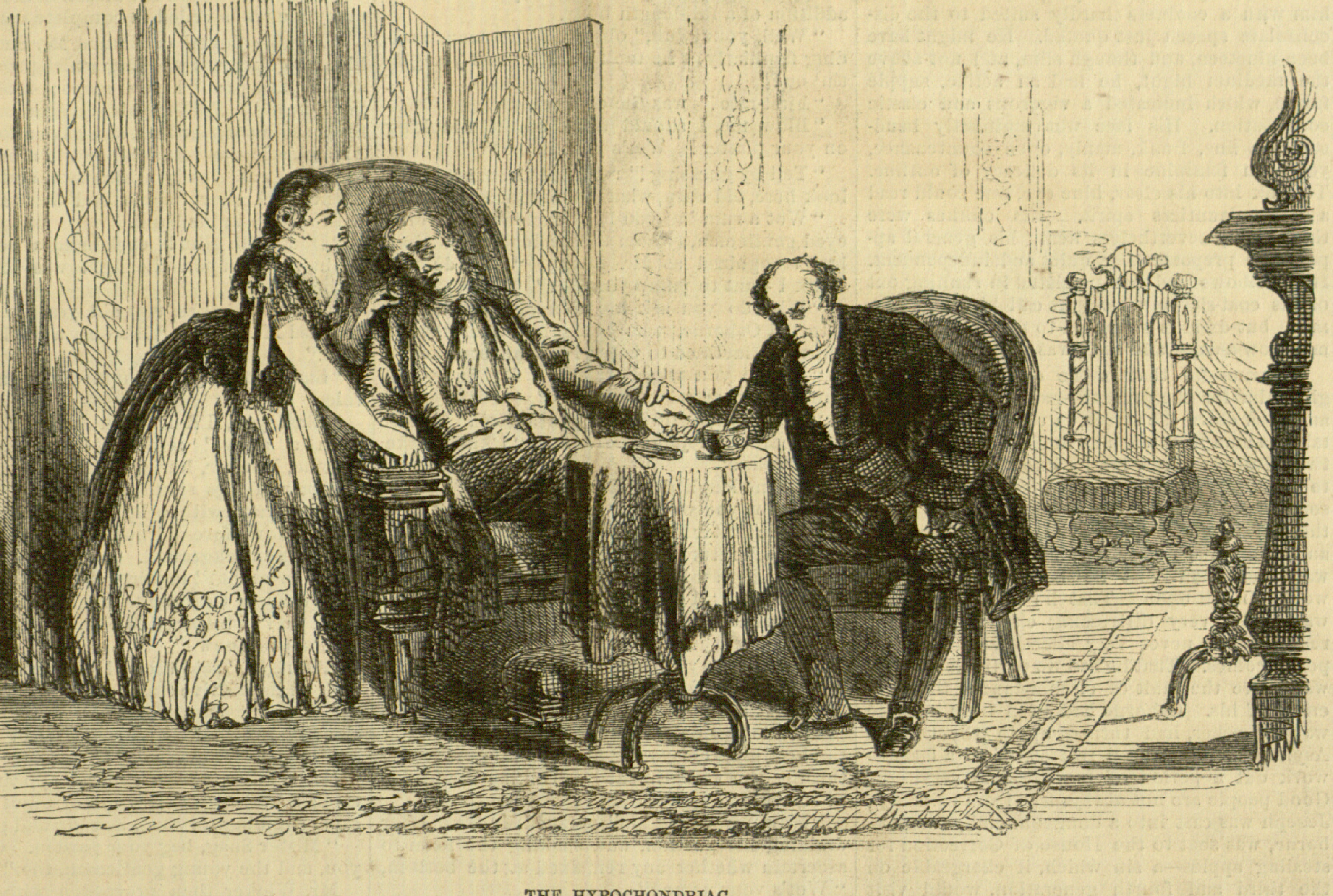
The hues that our to-morrows wear
Are by our yesterdays forecast;
Our future takes into itself
The true impression of our past.

The attrition of conflicting thoughts
To clear conclusions, wears the groove;
The love that seems to die, dies not,
But is absorbed in larger love.

We cannot cramp ourselves, unharmed,
In bonds of iron, nor of creeds;
The rights that rightfully belong
To man, are measured by his needs.

The daisy is entitled to
The nurture of the dew and light;
The green house of the grasshopper
Is his by nature's sacred right.

[ENTERED ACCORDING TO ACT OF CONGRESS, IN THE YEAR 1860 BY ROBERT BONNER, IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK.]



THE HYPOCHONDRIAC.

MOSES ORAN;

OR,

"THE BURGLARS' NEST."

BY GEO. CLARENCE BLANCHARD.

CHAPTER IV.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS.

The Tomtit's sentence was left unfinished—his knife was at the Detective's breast—when a man suddenly jumped from a bush, and seized the horse by the bridle; at that very instant a blow from an unseen hand descended on the Tomtit's head with terrific violence, and rolled him in the road. Unexpected and tremendous as was the shock, he sprang to his feet, and with one quick, determined lunge, laid his assailant dead on the ground.

"Stop! stop!" he shouted, in a flash of recognition, as several men rushed upon him, "*It is I—it's the Tomtit!*"

Mr. Detective Duffy had barely time to recover from the surprise occasioned by these startling incidents, before a knife was plunged in his breast, which, thanks to his disguise, was well lined with cotton. He turned quickly on his assailant, and dealt him a fierce blow; at the same instant his horse, frightened by the unusual noise, sprang forward, knocking over a burglar in front, and set off at full speed down the road; the vehicle might have been easily stopped, but in the confusion no effort was made to arrest its progress beyond a few random pistol shots.

All eyes were turned on one man, whose presence was so unexpected and surprising that the burglars could utter not one word, but stood looking on the Tomtit in blank amazement.

That individual, still reeling from the effects of the blow he had received, returned their gaze with a most withering expression of impotent rage; unable to account for their strange, unwelcome appearance, outrageous at being foiled, while just on the eve of accomplishing his purpose; stung to madness by the thought that his victim had escaped him, the burglar chief actually foamed at the mouth with frenzied passion.

"Villains!" gasped he, "what does all this mean?"

"Wot does it mean?" repeated Mr. Snag, whose countenance looked extremely lugubrious and foolish.

"Yes!" repeated the Tomtit, stamping the ground with fury: "what's all this for? Who in the devil's name sent you here?"

As there was no reply to these questions, which would not have been very agreeable to answer, the Tomtit's temper burst out afresh.

"Skulking, meddlesome fools!" gasped he, "I see it all. You must be doing something contrary; would that I had shot you all—would that I had served you all as that body yonder!"

He pointed sneeringly to the dead burglar, who lay with his face downward. One of the gang turned it over with his foot—it was Dick Hatton's corpse.

"Yes!" continued the Tomtit, "I wish I'd served you all the same. Pretty doings, dodging after your chief, as though he didn't know what he was about!"

"Who knowed it wos you?" said Mr. Snag, deprecatingly.

"Who knowed it was I? All of you, every one of you—every infernal son of you."

The Tomtit thought again of the game that had slipped through his fingers, and fairly danced with rage.

"Wot's the matter now?" returned Mr. Snag, with a very rueful air.

The Tomtit's only reply was to fetch a blow at that individual, who, having the presence of mind to dodge it, it took effect on the luckless person of Mr. Molecat, and laid him sprawling.

The gang gazed at each other, then at Mr. Molecat, and very suggestively on the dead body.

"Stupids!" continued the exasperated chief, wiping the perspiration that stood on his brow, "why didn't you make way with the man at once? What did you let him escape for?"

"We wos so surprised," replied Mr. Molecat, "that it kind o' flustered us."

"See, you fools, what you have lost!" pursued the Tomtit. "I intended to kill the man myself, but your infernal meddlesome scheme has ruined everything. I s'pose you'll come to your senses when you find out it's *Duffy!*"

The burglars uttered a shout of astonishment.

"Rot my bones!" exclaimed Mr. Snag, impetuously, "wot a go this here is. Why didn't you tell us that afore?"

"Why! why!" repeated the Tomtit, furiously: "when you were all driving at me?"

"That big vig and paint'd face of your'n wos werry deceptive," said Mr. Molecat.

"Was it?" rejoined the Tomtit, sarcastically; "no—I don't believe a word of it! you all knew me!"

"No, no, no!" exclaimed the burglars, with one voice.

"Well," continued the Tomtit, somewhat mollified, "there aint no use in crying over spilt milk. The mischief's done; and now all that we've got to do is to set about and repair it. Now, then, see if you can dig a hole for that corpse!"

"S'pose we pitch it over the rocks?" suggested Mr. Snag.

"Very good," growled the Tomtit: "some of you here!"

About a half yard from where they stood was an enormous ravine. Sharp-pointed rocks, rising one above the other, bounded the sides; and the bottom could scarcely be seen, so deep was the yawning chasm. To this the Tomtit pointed; and silently raising their dead comrade, the burglars, with one last glance at his stiffened form, hurled him into the abyss. They could hear the body in its descent tearing through the bushes—then all was still.

"Now, then," broke forth the Tomtit, who had been regarding the performance with his customary coolness, "we'll back again to the Nest; and no time to be lost either, for that Duffy will be on our track like lightning. Oh, curse me!" he added, with a sudden burst of passion; "how I have been thwarted! and by my own men, too!"

The burglars slowly and thoughtfully wended their way back.

"Blow me!" remarked Mr. Snag, "it's a bad job, this here is. Boys, just think of it—the Dectective! Oh, my eyes, wot a go!"—— Mr. Snag thereupon, to testify his sense of the error he had committed, ripped out a variety of expletives, not necessary to mention, and wound up with a melo-dramatic howl.

"Boys," sudenly exclaimed the Tomtit, turning round, "you've been deceiving me! How do I know but you may do it again?"

"Never!" exclaimed the gang.

"We were sneaked into it. Dick was the one."

"Curse him!" growled the Tomtit, savagely. "See what came of him; that's the way traitors fare. He met his deserts; though, boys, I knew him not."

The burglar chief looked at his men fixedly. He saw at a glance they implicitly believed him, and he was satisfied. The truth of the matter was that the Tomtit had purposely made away with his subordinate; his quick eye had recognized him, stunned and confused as he had been by the blow, and he took ample vengeance.

The eavesdropper would now have no tales to tell.

Great was the astonishment, great the indignation of Mr. Beg and his amiable spouse, when the events we have so hastily chronicled were communicated to them. Mr. Beg lifted his hands and eyes to the ceiling, and gave way to a most emphatic expression of profanity, while his good lady commenced forthwith howling and screeching,—a species of lamentation that was promptly suppressed by the Tomtit.

That individual after partaking of some cold sausages and sailor's bread, and drinking a mug of coffee, pushed back his chair, and gave the table a peculiar rap, generally indicative of his having something important to communicate.

"Now, boys, we'll see how things can be managed. I have been thinking matters over, and there's nothing else to do but to trot."

"Wot, Beg and all?" inquired Mr. Snag.

"No. Beg will remain," replied the chief decisively. "He's a careful fellow, and I can trust him. It won't be safe for any of us to stay, however, for Duffy will be on our track before sundown. See what a scrape you've got us all in."

Mr. Snag groaned audibly.

"I'd rather lost my arm, any time," continued the Tomtit, with a vehement blow on the table "than have such a go as this; why the Nest has been suspected long enough, and now we can't show our heads here. Duffy's a sharp fellow, and knows what he's about."

Mr. Snag groaned again.

"Look here, boys," said that individual in an explanatory tone. "I stuck the cuss twice, but blast me if it seemed to hurt him."

"Maybe you don't know the reason," replied the Tomtit. "cotton aint to be pinked in a hurry."

"Wot!" ejaculated Mr Snag, crushing his hat over his eyes as a proper expression of his astonishment. "Blow me, if I don't pay him yet!"

"Now, then, see that you do, and don't chatter about it; but look here, this is a serious matter," pursued the Tomtit, "and we ought to waste no time in talking. I must away, and in the meanwhile make *yourselves* scarce; remember to-morrow night—Slinger's—eleven o'clock.'

With this brief direction, which seemed to be perfectly comprehended by his followers, the burglar chief left the room. Mr. Beg followed him out with an anxious face.

"Beg," whispered he, as soon as they reached the door that led to the rear of the house, "I am about to leave you here. It's a risk—there's some danger, you are not afraid to meet it?"

"No!" replied Beg firmly, his cheeks nevertheless turning pale. "If the Tomtit wants me to go, I go; if he says stay, I stay. You know me Mo——"

"Stop!" ejaculated the other, instantly placing his hand over his mouth, "never utter that name; how often have I cautioned you never to breathe it even to the air."

"I forgot," returned Mr. Beg, somewhat disconcerted. "When I don't think, it slips out, it seems so natural."

"Keep it to yourself!" interrupted the Tomtit fiercely. "If the boys hear it they'll lose confidence in me; blast them," he added with a fearful oath, "they are too sharp for me already. Beg, you ought to have known about this."

"I didn't hear a word of it—they kept everything shady; I kind of thought, too, I saw the deuse in Dick's face last night."

"Well, he's got his walking ticket, and good riddance too! Now, Beg, listen; you are to remain here. I know there is danger, but I am pretty certain that you will do things up brown. Duffy thinks he has us, but from bits of information I got from him, I feel positive he only suspects; the upshot of the matter will be that he'll be down here to-day or to-morrow with a posse of police; meeting me in diguise he will be led off in a wrong direction, for I don't believe he's going to find the Nest so easy again. What evil star led him to it last night is more than I can tell; any how he shan't find it this time, if I can help it; now, then, should I fail in this scheme and the 'Nest' is invaded; why you can put on an innocent countenance, and swear you never saw any of us before—stop—you can hatch up a good story of being robbed and maltreated."

"What then?" inquired Mr. Beg, with one of his humorous grins.

"Why then!" continued the Tomtit musingly, "you can cut yourself so as to give effect to your story; make out you've been treated very bad by the ruffians; wife insulted, and all that."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Mr. Beg, approvingly.

"In the meanwhile," pursued Tomtit, "remove every article that looks suspicious. Now, Beg, the key again."

The mysterious key which had been used the previous evening was produced, and handed to the Tomtit; hastily nodding a passing salute, he walked out, leaping over a stone wall that enclosed the rear portion of the house, and striking briskly into a small path cut out of a dense copse of brushwood; through this narrow opening he made his way, the decayed branches snapping and crunching under his feet, and the dry leaves rustling and falling around him; as he proceeded the labyrinth assumed a more tortuous and intricate appearance and forced him occasionally to pause and remove the dead shrubbery that obstructed his passage; two yards further there was a small opening with an abutment of solid rock rising like a wall to oppose his further progress. This was quickly scaled by means of spikes that had been driven in, and the burglar chief having safely descended on the other side walked swiftly onwards over flinty rocks and clumps of bushes.

The pathway now widened, and partially presented to view a small cavern, hewn out of the solid masonry. Its entrance was well secured by a strong iron door; the Tomtit paused, and looked around him with his habitual caution; but caution was not necessary; in that wild, lonely spot nought could be seen but tangled woods and gloomy, precipitous hights, which mortal man never dared to climb. Five years before, the Tomtit, while hunting, accidentally came across this place, and struck with the isolated situation, determined to put it to good account. Mr. Beg, with the assistance of his own mechanical skill, had succeeded in making a snug and dry little apartment within, and the secret was carefully preserved by the two.

The Tomtit, calling his key in requisition, opened it, and lit a small lamp. Scattered about, and hanging around in all directions, were garments of every description; cloaks, shawls, cassocks, petticoats, bonnets, head-dresses, coats, jackets, leggings; in short, every specimen of dress, male and female, was there. Near the entrance stood a table, and on it a looking-glass.

"Ha!" thought the burglar chief, surveying the extensive wardrobe with a complaisant smile, "this is the secret of my success; the fools who watch me wonder where I obtain my disguises; watch me as they may, they never find me out; here I am safe." He paused, and then proceeded to change his apparel expeditiously.

In a short time he was so metamorphosed that he fairly laughed aloud as he contemplated himself.

"Now for it," muttered the Tomtit, as he blew out the light and moved towards the door. There was a small-sized bag lying in his way, and he took it up and weighed it with a calculating hand.

"A little heavier, and it will do; Beg must get rid of that woman of his. The master and his dog shall travel." The bag chinked heavily as he returned it to the ground.

About two hours thereafter the incidents just recorded, an uncouth countryman might have been seen trudging on the high road, with a small bundle slung over his shoulder, stopping ever and anon to gaze around with an anxious, watchful attention.

CHAPTER V.

THE VAN CLEEKER HOUSE.

In a certain street in Philadelphia, standing up in its ghostly, antique stateliness, was the old family mansion of the Van Cleekers. It had stood in the same proud, conspicuous position for thirty years, gazing with patriarchal benignity on its new, white-blind neighbors, that were springing around so cosily; never envying their healthy red cheeks, never dissatisfied with the thought that it was growing old; never dreaming that it was aught else but the great Van Cleeker house.

The outside, with its aristocratic entrance of marble steps and iron railing, would give but a faint idea of the comfort that was within; the large hall, with its green baize covering and sofa, looked snug and cosy, and prepared the mind, as it followed the body, up the winding staircase, to appreciate the spacious parlor and airy chambers. There were but four inmates in that big house, and yet it could not very well be lonely or dull, while one little fairy tripped about it, awakening a thousand glad echoes with her cheerful little laugh. Mrs. Platt, her aunt, and Mr. Van Cleeker were blanks; she was the prize, and testy and cross as the old man was, he acknowledged it; everybody acknowledged it. Fanny, fresh from school, hardly sixteen, joyous and happy, cared little whether she was a prize or a blank, as long as she was permitted to race about the house, frightening good Mrs. Platt half to death with her funny teasing.

Mrs. Platt, who comes next in order for description, was a tall, prim lady, originally intended by nature as an old maid. Her prominent features, though homely, were indicative of a good disposition and active domestic traits; married by accident, she was widowed by accident, Mr. Platt having lost his life by steamboat explosion, leaving his disconsolate helpmate a mortgaged house and sundry unpaid bills as a memento of his affection and regard. Under the existing circumstances, Mrs. Platt very gratefully accepted an offer from her brother of a home, a kindness which she repaid by acting as housekeeper.

In one of the rooms of the Van Cleeker mansion, closed so as scarcely to admit a ray of daylight, sat Mr. Van Cleeker, curled up in his armchair, looking nervously in the fire that was blazing, snapping and crackling in its old-fashioned corner. A dark-eyed, youthful girl was standing near him, affectionately holding his cold and trembling hand in hers.

"Fanny, dear Fanny," murmured the invalid, "I'm dying—call Mrs. Platt!"

"I sha'n't do any such thing, papa," replied Miss Van Cleeker, firmly, but with a slight sigh. "Didn't Doctor Merton tell you yesterday that there isn't any danger. Since I have returned from school you have been doing nothing but dying."

"Call Mrs. Platt, I say!"

"Why, she won't come if I call her," returned Miss Van Cleeker; "she's in the kitchen, busy as a bee."

"Ugh!" groaned the invalid, angrily, "how I am treated; nobody thinks I am sick; nobody sympathizes with me. I say, I *am* dying; my hands are cold, feel of them!"

"You are nervous, papa, that's all," rejoined the young lady, as she affectionately patted her father's hands, and stroked the hair from his forehead.

"Nervous!" repeated Mr. Van Cleeker; "I say I am not nervous any more than you; I know my feelings. I'm dying."

"Then you are dying, if you *will* have it so," returned Miss Van Cleeker, smiling.

"Yes, I'm dying," continued he, leaning back in his chair, with a visage woefully lengthened.

Mr. Van Cleeker was a dyspeptic, and for a number of years had been tormented with this frightful disease. Originally of a hearty, cheerful temperament, the loss of his wife materially affected his health, and in a few years he was a confirmed hypochondriac.

Mr. Van Cleeker, after the lapse of a few moments, raised his head, and looked half peevishly, half affectionately in the cheerful face of the young girl, whose earnest eyes were gazing thoughtfully in the fire.

"Fanny, what are you thinking about?"

"I was thinking about a great many things," replied Miss Van Cleeker; "and especially about you. I was thinking," continued she, "that you ought to travel."

"Ugh!" groaned Mr. Van Cleeker, "don't talk to me about travelling, when I can scarcely move a step. Dear me! I wish the doctor would come."

She thought it was time, and started to open the blinds to look at her watch, when there came a strong pull at the door bell.

"There he is now!" exclaimed she, smiling and running towards the door.

"Come back—don't leave me alone!" called the invalid, in a tone of alarm.

Miss Van Cleeker clapped her hands gleefully, and her very cheerfulness seemed to exercise a magical influence over the old man, for his thin features relapsed in a half smile. The doctor's heavy boots could now be heard ascending the stairs, and in a few minutes he entered, puffing and blowing. Dr. Merton was a full-blooded man of Falstaffic proportions, and a genial, pleasant face.

"Well done, little gipsy," said he; "acting as nurse again?"

"As you see me, Doctor," replied Miss Van Cleeker, demurely.

"As I see you, hey! Why, I should think one blink of those black eyes would be enough to cure your father of all his maladies. Well, sir," he added pleasantly, drawing a seat near the invalid, "how do you find yourself to-day? Better, I hope."

"Not a bit of it," returned the dyspeptic, gloomily. "I came near dying a few moments ago."

"Eh! what!" ejaculated the doctor, smiling, as he took hold of his extended wrist, and pulled out his watch. "Pulse regular as can be," he added. "You must try and overcome this exceeding nervousness. Miss Fanny, what would you prescribe?"

"Well, if I should say," replied Miss Van Cleeker, mischievously, knowing that her father had an aversion to pastry, and thinking to divert his mind from his complaint, "I would recommend one of Aunt Susan's pies."

"Saucy girl!" said Mr. Van Cleeker, coloring; "leave this room this instant."

"Why, papa, I didn't——"

"Leave this room, I say!"

As this sentence was just what the artful little Miss Van Cleeker expected, she rose, courteseyed to the doctor, and obeyed him with her customary cheerfulness, running and leaping down stairs, singing merrily as she went, till she reached the kitchen, where Mrs. Platt, like a true New England woman, was busied cutting out her pie crusts.

"Dear me, what's that!" ejaculated that good lady, as a peculiar noise in the entry arrested her attention; it sounded like the voice of a child sobbing. "Nancy, there, now, you see, there's that boy back again. Little boy!" she called, moving to the entry, "you needn't come here any more, for to tell you the truth, I don't believe a word of your story, and what's more, I'll have a magistrate after you if you come bothering me again," when Mrs. Platt stopped short, as a clear, ringing laugh broke forth, and Fanny Van Cleeker rushed from her hiding place.

"Dear aunt," she exclaimed, putting her arms affectionately round her neck, "didn't I catch you nice?"

"Well, I am sure I thought it was the boy, and I am glad it turned out differently, for I don't like to think he's an impostor, though it's likely he may be one, for all that; I don't believe, to tell the truth, that he has any mother," continued Mrs. Platt, returning to her avocation. "I have a great mind to tell him so, just to let him know that he aint deceiving me, though I must say I don't like to hurt his feelings."

"Didn't I mimic him good, aunt?" laughed little Miss Van Cleeker, pulling her ears teasingly.

"Yes—you are a strange girl; I told your father that boarding school wouldn't do you any good, and it turned out just as I said. If you'd remained at home and studied history, it would have done, I am sure, a deal more for you. To be sure, when I come to think of it, you never did take much to history. I remember when I was a girl, a gentleman wanted to know something about Napoleon or Hannibal, I don't know which, crossing the Alps, and I think I told him, my dear, that Hannibal or Napoleon—it don't make so much difference which it was—got defeated, my dear, because he neglected to pass the Rubicon. I think it was the Rubicon, though it might have been the Hellespont, or the bridge of boats, though when I come to think of it, it wasn't a bridge."

At this speech, delivered with all the gravity of a historian, little Miss Van Cleeker smothered her face in her handkerchief, and finally burst out in such a saucy laugh, that her good aunt could scarcely refrain from smiling herself.

"Well, my dear, I can't see anything to laugh at, though now I remember, you always did make fun of history, and I sometimes wish you loved it as I do, and had my remarkable memory for dates. Suppose, my dear, your beau should ask you when the battle of Salamis was fought, which I dare say you couldn't tell, you would feel so mortified that——"

"I haven't got any beaux, thank goodness," replied little Miss Van Cleeker, with an independent toss of her pretty head.

"Well, my dear, perhaps you haven't, though I must say I thought a young gentleman called to see you every other day."

"Oh, that horrid Mr. Pecks, I suppose you mean him!" interrupted Miss Van Cleeker, with a scornful pout of her lips. "Why, aunt Susan, I can't bear him."

"There, my dear, what a strange girl you are, to be sure. Well, I didn't suppose you did care much for him, for now I come to think of it, you left his bouquet on the pianoforte, which was very wrong of you."

"He's such a bore, aunt. Do you think he made me sit up the other night till half-past eleven o'clock, talking his stuff about Latin synonyms; I fell asleep—I couldn't help it—and when I awoke there was that horrid fellow actually going on as though I had been listening all the while."

"Well, my dear, I don't think you treat him right, for he does appear to be a very clever little fellow; for, when I come to think of it, I was asking some questions about the Spartans, my dear, and Romulus and Remus; and I think, my dear, he said it wasn't true, or something of that kind, and I felt mighty bad to know they wasn't real characters, though I didn't care so much about Remus. You don't treat Mr. Pecks right at all, my dear!"

"Now, aunt," interposed little Miss Van Cleeker, half slily, half humorously, "I do think you are too bad, but I don't care a bit for all you say!" and the young lady commenced chasing her kitten.

"How's your father, love?" inquired Mrs. Platt, after a short silence.

"That reminds me, aunt!" exclaimed the young lady, stopping in the midst of her sportive exercise. "I am so sorry for poor papa; everything alarms him, and he imagines he's dying constantly."

"Don't you know, my dear, that's the dyspepsia? Now I have been recommending brother to try a little pounded chalk and alum, which I am sure will cure him. I have heard of twenty people in this neighborhood who were cured by it. I should like to know if the ancients ever had the dyspepsy. I don't much believe it, though I am sure powdered chalk and alum would have been very beneficial to them."

As it seemed very probable that good Mrs. Platt was about to go off in another historical strain, Miss Van Cleeker recommenced her romp with the kitten; then suddenly pausing, she said:

"If papa would only exercise, and not mope himself to death; why he won't even ride in the coach."

"That, my dear," returned Mrs. Platt, "is on James's account. James overturned your papa one day, and ever since he's been afraid to go, though I don't think he suspected that James was drunk; but he was, and I couldn't help seeing it, for I tried hard to believe he was sick; it was really quite shocking to think of."

"Dear me! how frightened I should have been," observed Miss Van Cleeker. "I wonder you didn't tell papa about it."

"Well, my dear, your father was so nervous that I didn't have the heart to tell him, and James begged so hard to be let off, and appeared so sorry, that I am sure I was doing quite right to keep it a secret, and I think James feels very bad himself, and——"

It was just at this precise moment that the occupants of the kitchen were startled by the basement door opening suddenly, and swinging to again with terrific violence.

"Mercy! who's there?" exclaimed Mrs. Platt, as a man's voice commenced singing lustily in the passage.

All conjecture was, however, cut short by the entrance of James, the coachman, who was making several ineffectual attempts to finish the ditty which announced his presence.

"Mercy, James! Is it you?" exclaimed Mrs. Platt, raising her doughy hands in unfeigned astonishment.

James stepped back in drunken surprise at the unexpected apparition of the two ladies. Concealment was now out of the question. Mr. Van Cleeker was duly informed of the circumstance, the coachman was promptly discharged, and a vacancy thereby created in the mansion—a vacancy which, as the reader will see, in the sequel, has an important bearing in the development of our plot.

CHAPTER VI.

FRESH INCIDENTS.

Chestnut street was alive with people, hurrying hither and thither, with anxious, distressed faces. A great commercial crisis was upon them. Banks were breaking, and business stagnating. It was a season of anxious inquiry, of gloomy suspense, and of hopeless despair. Bankruptcy, ruin, starvation joined hand in hand in that ill-fated year 1837.

In the features of that rushing crowd, how many tales could be read—dark and desponding—mutely pointing to firesides which no longer shone with the cheerful, serene happiness of former days, when the good wife awaited the coming of the fond papa, with his arms full of hurdles, and little children ran gleefully to greet him with a glad welcome; the blazing hearthstones surrounded with radiant, happy faces—the tea-table with its tea-urn sending up a hallowed incense—the merry laugh, and genial current of converse,—all disappearing, all fading away before the withering breath of the great panic.

There were other countenances mixed up with these, that looked even more restless and woebegone, as though ambitious schemes had been dashed to pieces—as though rich prizes had been plucked from their outstretched grasp—as though the world, to them, was turning into brass, and tinkling the hollow vanity of all things.

And others still, who seemed impervious to care—reckless faces, that stood indifferently around, as though careless of their fate.

"Nothing to eat, nothing to wear, and nobody to speak to; ahem! a very pleasant prospect indeed!"

Thus soliloquised a youth, who was standing near the City Hall, surveying the scene before him with a coolness hardly suited to the disconsolate speech just quoted. He might have been nineteen, and though slim, and not above the medium hight, he had an active, supple frame, which indicated a vigorous and elastic constitution. His face was eminently handsome—a fine, frank, manly, open countenance, yet even feminine in its delicacy of outline. To look into his clear, blue eye, one could read a bold, dauntless spirit. His clothes were threadbare, nevertheless neat; his general appearance prepossessing, quiet and independent. If his elbows had not persisted in running out of his coat-sleeve, we might call him a gentleman, but dress is supposed to make the gentleman now-a-days, and so it was then.

Osborne—for that is the only name we can give him for the present—gazed up the street, and then down the street, in the state of uncertainty a man feels when he finds himself between two advancing fires, hardly knowing which way to turn. Most people have some resource—somewhere to look to—some place to go when the storm comes; but poor Osborne, friendless and alone, was rather perplexed with the awkward reflection that he had nobody in the world to call upon. That he had no relatives was not a very distressing circumstance, for relatives are never very affectionate till prosperity comes. That he had no particular friends was more the fault of circumstances than any crime of his. Osborne had been born in some way or other, had turned up in the Orphan Asylum, and had been trotted off to a farm to work out a period of probationary servitude. Good people are not always free from calumny; Joseph was cast into a dungeon, and young Osborne, was sent to the House of Correction for stealing apples—a sin which, if chargeable on the third and fourth generation, would visit posterity with direful calamities. Misfortunes never come single; young Osborne incurred the hate and resentment of everybody for being a handsome orphan boy. Big people, who rolled in carriages and wealth, felt not much gratification in comparing their sickly plants with the strong, pretty blossom of charity. Romantic people were as few in those days as in these, and adoptions a very rare circumstance when unallied with wealth. So Osborne grew up, sneered at and passed by, and it was human nature that he should undervalue himself.

"Nothing to eat, nothing to wear, and nobody to speak to! Well, who cares!" was the reckless thought of our hero, as he looked up Chestnut street and whistled to himself. Philosophy is a very good thing, but philosophy does little towards satisfying the appetite and providing for the wants of that mystical region called the stomach. So it was a very natural circumstance that Osborne should feel hungry, and another very natural circumstance that he should indulge in a wish to gratify it. So, thrusting his hands in his pockets, by way of reminding himself of their emptiness, he turned up the street, and sauntered carelessly along, gazing in the shop windows, dreamily, as many others do, without really knowing it.

A pin lay on the pavement and he stooped and picked it up, at the same time a silver piece shining through the crevices of brick arrested his attention; with little difficulty he picked it out of the hole and found it to be a dime. Osborne thought the circumstance a very lucky windfall—it might have been providential—it was certainly opportune, and relieved him from an irrepressible desire to seize upon a neighboring cake stand which he had been feasting his hungry eyes on for some time. To find an eating house was the next thing, so he walked down Chesnut street in a more cheerful mood. Osborne had seen restaurants enough during the day, when the sight of them was only an aggravation, but now none could be found.

After walking a considerable distance without having succeeded, his attention was finally drawn to a sign suspended over the door of a public house, "*Restaurant—meals furnished at all hours.*" Osborne, without reading further, walked in. There was a fat boy standing at the bar opening oysters, and a very fat man near him, reading a dirty newspaper.

A row of boxes ornamented with red curtains were ranged around, and from an occasional laugh, and clatter of knives and forks, it was evident that the boxes were inhabited.

"Sell a meal cheap here?" inquired Osborne.

"Mr. Sniffly!" called the fat boy.

The gentleman referred to looked up from his newspaper.

"This man wants vittles."

"Can he pay for 'em?" queried Mr. Sniffly.

Whereupon Osborne held up his hand and showed the piece of money.

The fat gentleman put down his newspaper.

"We can provide you, young fellow!" said he.

"What have you got?" asked Osborne.

"Beef six cents; Lamb six cents; Chicken one levy; Turkey fifteen cents;" said the fat gentleman.

"I'll take some beef," returned Osborne.

"Beef six cents, money in advance!"

Osborne accordingly handed Mr. Sniffly the dime, which Mr. Sniffly, after tossing on the counter to test its genuineness, put in the money box.

"Tea?" inquired Mr. Sniffly, rattling the change by way of reminding Osborne that he had four cents left.

"How much?" asked Osborne.

"Three cents;" said the fat gentleman.

Osborne concluded he would reserve his money, so Mr. Sniffly returned the change, and directing him to take a seat in an adjoining box, went off to bring the beef.

Our hero, without observing that a man had been attentively peeping at him through the red curtain during this brief colloquy, quietly took the seat pointed out by Mr. Sniffly, and amused himself with spinning the pennies on the table. Looking up in the midst of it, he was rather startled by the apparition of a man's head looking down upon him from the next box.

"Halloo!" said Osborne; "who are you looking at?"

The head grinned from ear to ear.

"Looking at *you*, my young 'un; wot you *doing* there?"

"Find out by your learning," replied Osborne.

The head grinned again. It was a very repulsive, ugly head, with a pair of shaggy eyebrows, and an ominous, cat-like eye, shining restlessly in its yellow orbit.

"You are a saucy 'un!"

"Look to home for that," retorted Osborne, returning the pennies to his pocket, with a distrustful glance at the head.

"Is that all the chink you've got?" continued the head, in no wise disconcerted by Osborne's abrupt replies.

"Maybe it is, and maybe it isn't," said Osborne, with a cunning glance.

The head was about to answer this evasive remark, when Mr. Sniffly returned with the meat, whereat the head suddenly vanished.

"Here's your beef," said Mr. Sniffly, placing a small dish, with a still smaller slice of meat on it; "bread and potatoes included. Anything else?"

"No, sir," returned Osborne, "this will do;" and he set to work, and eat with a voracity and eagerness that in a very short time emptied his plate. He was occupied in finishing his meal, when the curtain was drawn aside and the head re-appeared, this time followed by the natural addition of a full-length body.

"Well, young 'un," observed the man, nodding familiarly as he took a seat, "how you gettin' on?"

"First-rate!" was the cool reply.

"Blow me, I should think so, from looking on your platter! Wot's your name?"

"Tell by guessing!" returned Osborne. "But look here, old chap, what you pumping me for?"

"Wot a rum 'un you be!" exclaimed the one-eyed gentleman, (whom the reader by this time has recognized as Mr. Snag.) "Wot do you think I want to pump you for?"

"Why do you ask me so many questions?" retorted Osborne, who being in better humor felt more inclined to enter into conversation.

"I'll tell you why," returned Mr. Snag, "if you'll answer straight yourself."

"Very well," said Osborne, "agreed."

"Because," rejoined Mr. Snag, "I kinder like your looks!"

Osborne laughed good-naturedly.

"Maybe you wouldn't like me so well if you knew me better!"

"Well," returned Mr. Snag, crossing his legs and looking around to assure himself they had no listeners, "I guess we'll find out afore long. S'pose we have a mug of ale?"

As this was just the very thing Osborne most desired, he very cheerfully acquiesced, and Mr. Snag, leaning his head out of the box, called to to the fat boy.

The ale was duly brought, Mr. Snag drinking the health of his young friend, and Osborne returning the compliment by drinking the health of Mr. Snag.

"Now, my young un," pursued Mr. Snag, after draining his portion, and shaking the foam to ascertain whether any remained at the bottom, "Wot's your name?"

"Osborne!"

"Any other?" inquired Mr. Snag.

Our hero reflected for a few moments; he was unwilling to acknowledge he had no further cognomen, so after a short deliberation, he coolly replied:

"Yes. Pluck."

"Pluck," repeated Mr. Snag, "a very good name that is. Doing business here?"

Osborne shook his head.

"Want it, I s'pose?"

"Certainly!" was the curt reply.

Mr. Snag impulsively rubbed his ha

"Any daddy or mammy?"

"None that I know of."

"Wot! no daddy or mammy. S'pose you have kin?"

"Not even kin!" replied Osborne, smiling.

"Well, you are a rum un, you be," said Mr. Snag, regarding his young protégé with increasing admiration.

"Haven't no shiners either, I s'pose?"

"None except what you saw me spinning on the table," said Osborne, "and I *found* them too."

"Blow me!" exclaimed Mr. Snag, his face lighting up with a preconceived idea; "young un, s'pose I might let on of a business where you might make a power of money?"

"Good, I like the idea," returned Osborne, "what kind of business is it?"

"Wot kind of business?" repeated Mr. Snag, cautiously, "why it's a good business. See here," continued he, lowering his voice, "you wouldn't mind its being a leetle venturesome?"

"No, I wouldn't," replied Osborne.

"Then," continued Mr. Snag, mysteriously, "just wait a spell;" he rose and having carefully examined the two adjoining boxes, and satisfied himself that nobody was within range to listen, he returned and laying his hand on Osborne's shoulder, put his mouth close to his ear, and whispered:

"I'll tell you wot it is, it's *pickin' locks!*"

"Picking what?" said Osborne.

"Pickin' locks!" repeated Mr. Snag in a strong whisper.

"Picking locks!" echoed Osborne, innocently "what's that?"

"Blow me, if you aint jolly green," returned Mr. Snag half contemptuously, "don't you know what pickin' locks is?"

"If you mean house breaking——" said Osborne.

"Hush!" interrupted Mr. Snag, "who said anything about house breaking?"

"Then what is it?" rejoined Osborne, impatiently.

Mr. Snag's only reply was to take another cautious survey of the field, then sitting nearer to our hero, he continued:

"Young 'un, pickin' locks is wot *it is*—pickin' locks, and nothing else. It isn't passing flash money, or gammoning with kite paper, or shop sparking, or nothing of that ere kind, but it's pickin' locks, that's wot it is." Mr. Snag, with this comprehensive definition, crossed his legs again, and watched the countenance of his companion with no small degree of anxiety.

As Osborne offered no reply, Mr. Snag uncrossed his legs, and inquired—

"Young 'un, do you take?"

Osborne nodded his head affirmatively.

"You see," continued Mr. Snag, earnestly, "business is business. One man has one sort of business, and another has another. The parson has his trade, the spouter has his, and wot they call a lawyer has his'n. All of 'em gets paid for it, and if they wasn't paid, why, they wouldn't preach, or spout, or kick up a bobbery, don't you see?"

"Go on," said Osborne, drumming on the table thoughtfully.

"Well," pursued Mr. Snag, "pickin' locks is a business, too, only you see it aint so pop'lar as the rest of 'em, but it's a business, and a very good business at that, eh?"

"So it is," said Orborne, mechanically.

"Of course it is," echoed Mr. Snag, triumphantly; "an' you see, young 'un, where locks is picked, it aint the poor 'uns that has to bear it, but the mint drop boys, and that makes a sort of division or parcelling out, and prevents 'em from gettin' pursy. If we didn't pick locks, others would, so we save 'em the trouble."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Osborne.

"Ha, ha, ha!" echoed Mr. Snag, facetiously poking his young friend in the ribs.

"See here," continued Mr. Snag, "I reckon we know each other, don't we?"

"Up and down," returned Osborne, with hearty emphasis.

"Now," continued Mr. Snag, "I've got plenty more to say, but this aint the shop to say it in; s'pose you trot over to our pigeon hole, where we can wag our tongues till morning."

"Good, I'm in for it," said Osborne.

Mr. Snag and his protégé accordingly arose, and together left the restaurant. It was getting dark, and the lamps were already lit in the streets, which were still filled with a rushing crowd of pedestrians. Mr. Snag, bidding Osborne follow, walked briskly along, turning up this square, going down the next, twisting round corners, and, in short, performing as many evolutions as would have puzzled an experienced cab-driver. Osborne, who had been on his legs since morning, with difficulty kept pace with his sturdy companion. He was just on the point of declaring he could go no further, when Mr. Snag abruptly turned down a narrow alley, and made a sudden pause.

"Young 'un," muttered Mr. Snag, catching him by the arm, "this way—up here."

Osborne looked in the direction indicated, but everything was veiled in complete darkness.

"Tumble along," continued Mr. Snag, leading him into a narrow opening which proved to be a small passage; "here's steps; look out for your head." Pulling his companion up, Mr. Snag made another halt, and gave a low whistle. The whistle was returned, and in a brief period the bolt was slowly withdrawn, and the door opened. A short man stood at the entrance, with a lamp in his hand.

"Douse the glim!" exclaimed a hoarse voice behind, whereupon the light was immediately extinguished.

"Rot your bones, wot did you do that for?" growled Mr. Snag. "It's only a pal I've got behind."

"Snag, is that *you?*" inquired the same hoarse voice.

"Blast you, I'll let you know if you don't fetch a glim!" retorted Mr. Snag, angrily. "Come, Winker, hurry up there!"

A pair of legs shuffled away, and in a short time returned with a light, revealing the same short fellow aforesaid noticed, and another tall one in the background.

"Who's that?" inquired the tall one, as Mr. Snag ushered Osborne through a dirty entry.

"A pal!" whispered Mr. Snag; "the Tomtit's orders, *you* know!"

"All right," said the tall one, eyeing Osborne with an inquisitive stare.

"Winker! cuss you, why don't you come along?" growled Mr. Snag. "Rot me if you don't get lazier every day!"

Mr. Winker, whose general appearance indicated a rather reckless disregard of his toilet, came shuffling forward, bowing and grinning.

"Mister Snag, beg your pardon. Glad to see you, and the young gentleman, too."

Mr. Winker then proceeded without further remark to lead them into a small room, fitted up as a bar, which was scantily provided with a few broken wooden chairs, and a pine table much defaced by time and rough usage. The floor was sanded, and the ceiling and walls blackened by smoke, and stained with tobacco juice. Over the chimney corner hung a dirty pair of boxing gloves and a slung shot.

"Will the young gentleman take anything hot?" inquired Mr. Winker, with a movement towards the bar.

Osborne shook his head.

"And you, Mr. Snag?"

"Rot your bones! no!" replied that individual. Whereupon Mr. Winker, with another bow, shuffled out of the room.

Osborne took a seat by the stove, and Mr. Snag held a short whispered consultation with the tall one, at the end of which the tall gentleman nodded his head significantly, and retired, leaving Mr. Snag and his young friend alone.

Mr. Snag having now a favorable opportunity, descanted in glowing terms on the advantages and excellencies of his noble profession.

"An' now, Pluck," ended he, "wot do you say? Will you make one on us?"

"Mr. Snag," replied Osborne, "times are hard, money is scarce, and the business tip-top; in short, I'm your man!"

Mr. Snag fairly rose from his seat in the exuberance of his joy.

"I tell you wot, Pluck, you are 'un of 'em; I knowed it when I first blinked at your face; and now, my pal, let's have a drink."

"No, I won't!" returned Osborne, decidedly, "but I'll tell you, Mr. Snag, what would please me better: I am both tired and sleepy, so just point out a berth where I can turn in. You can start me up as early as you please."

Mr. Snag would have preferred to lengthen out the conversation, but seeing that his companion looked really quite exhausted, he gave a grunt of approval, and pointed out a closet adjoining the bar; a small pallet was lying there, with a few tumbled, worn-out blankets for a covering.

"This 'ere," said Mr. Snag, "is Winker's bunk, but I reckon he'll let you have it for to-night. Roll in, Pluck, and snooze all you can, for we'll trot afore daybreak."

Osborne looked at his dirty quarters in dismay. He was about to express a preference for a more airy apartment when the door was unceremoniously slammed in his face, and he heard the key turned upon him.

"Well," thought Osborne, as he pushed aside the dirty pallet, and stretched himself resignedly on the floor, "here is the commencement of adventures that may end in the State's Prison; but who cares?" and with this philosophical reflection he fell asleep.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

HOW TO INSPIRE MERCANTILE AMBITION.

Passing other subjects of less importance, we come at once to the main business of the instructor of youth—the improvement of the moral and intellectual powers; here the hand of the cultivator is of the utmost importance. The talent for poetry, for painting, or for sculpture, are latent powers, which require to be elicited; if neglected, they are as though they did not exist; but it is not thus with the intellectual and moral faculties; these being always in active existence, daily gain force, and, if not so directed as to form a good, inevitably form a bad character. In this most important part of the master's duty, imitation is his great instrument; abstract principles of right and wrong are weak in their influence, when compared with the force of early impressions, and the influence of example. That master would be deemed incompetent to his office, who, having under his care a youth intended for the senate, the forum, or the camp, did not fire his ambition by making him acquainted with the lives of those who had obtained distinction in the profession he was preparing to assume; the most conclusive reasoning, and the most methodical rules would be inert, compared with one bright example. The same principle governs in respect to pupils intended for the commercial walks of life. A teacher will necessarily have under his care not many, although he doubtless will have some, who are designed for the senate or the forum; but he will have many of the sons of wealthy merchants, whose object is the same honorable and useful sphere of action; these having more intercourse in common life, and more influence in it, require as well-directed an education. Teach them the duties of the station they are about to occupy; it is not enough that they read the Latin and the Greek authors you put into their hands; they are designed to be merchants, and, before they leave school, they should know the duties and the obligations of that station; draw out the character of the "great merchant," therefore, and place it before your pupil; tell him it must be his character if he aspires to respectability. A merchant should be active, but circumspect; prompt, yet prudent; honorable in his transactions, respectable for his judgment, decided in his conduct, liberal in his benefactions, no theorist or speculator, but one who proportions his returns by his capital, and his expenditure by his income; refer your pupil to instances, let him see that such men have lived, and do live, and that they are esteemed as the richest treasure and the brightest ornament of society. A generous youth will be animated by such a representation, and drink into its spirit; but, as a youth cannot be too familiar with the character he ought in future life to sustain, make that of a respectable merchant the frequent subject of a theme, and let the pupil place the character under various circumstances, till till he is enamored of its excellence. By such means as these the pupil can be fired with as much enthusiasm to become a great merchant as he could to become a great warrior; and with proper training will enter upon his career with the certainty of reaping prosperity and honor.

TWO KINDS OF HEARTS.

BY GEORGIANNA HERBERT.

"There are some hearts that, like the loving vine,
Cling to unkindly rocks and towers,
Spirits that suffer and do not repine—
Patient and sweet as newly-trodden flowers—
That from the passers heavy heel arise
And give back odorous breath instead of sighs.

"But there are *other* hearts that will not feel
The lowly love that haunts their eyes and ears:
That wound fond faith with anger worse than steel,
And out of pity's spring draw fruitless tears—
Oh! Nature, shall it always be thy will
Ill things with good to mingle, good with ill?"

Undoubtedly you have seen some of these hearts, reader, some of both sorts. We *all* have—and very likely it was the knowledge of the fact that her child was doomed to belong to one of the two classes here designated, that caused Mrs. Sternberg to resolve that he should never grow up with any degree of sensibility clinging to him. She remarked one day, to a lady friend who expostulated with her upon allowing her son to butcher lambs and drown youthful dogs and cats, on the ground that such deeds would tend to render him hard-hearted:

"That is the very thing I wish, madam; I do not wish *my* child to grow up and go out into the world with feelings so fine and tender that he would be liable to be constantly grieved and hurt. I use him early to the sight of suffering, and I allow him to inflict pain and to destroy life *for the very purpose of hardening his heart.* I am not going to have my only child made miserable, as I was, by being tender-hearted and affectionate."

Young Sternberg grew up just such a man as you would expect him to be from such training. He did have—wonderful to relate—considerable feeling for his mother, but none for anybody or anything else.

He married a woman whose heart he won by his outward grace and beauty, only to break it by his cold and cruel treatment of her after she became his wife. His children stirred the pulses of his pride, and so he seemed to love them, but he had no pity for them when they offended him; and when they died he would not weep. His wife was one of those broken and crushed flowers that the poet speaks of. Like the loving vine, she clung to that hard, cold tower, her husband. She loved and wept—she suffered, but did not repine. Patient and sweet, she walked through daily duties and through yearly cares, submitting humbly to the tyrant's rod—yes, *rod*, for the wretch kept one; and once, at least, he used it on his wife—*she* did not tell of the dastardly deed, but there was, beside God, a witness of it. In some unintended way she had displeased her husband, and he called her into a chamber and struck her many hard, sounding blows. The sound was heard; and one, looking through the keyhole, saw the deed, and saw the poor wife's struggles—not to get away, but as she writhed in pain—to suppress all loud expression of her distress and anguish both of body and soul.

The monster knew that the weak woman beneath his hand loved him better than she did her life; he knew—the unutterable wretch! that she would bear to lie down under his feet, and let him trample her into the dust before she would open her lips against him, and yet this was the way in which he rewarded her devotion. Shouldn't you think *he* wounded "fond faith with anger worse than steel?"

His children feared him as they feared death, but *he* feared nothing, no, not even death, for at last he died. He died in his wife's arms, and his last act was to lift his eyes to her face and smile. Nobody could understand that. Everybody was sorry that he did it; for that smile lingered on his dead face, which was provokingly handsome, as it had always been, and the poor wife could not be coaxed nor torn away. She was sure that, after all, her husband *had* loved her, though he certainly had chosen a singular way of showing it; and she thought she would be willing to take from him a private whipping every day of her life, if she could but have him back once more.

She went into mourning, and she never put it off. To her husband's memory she was true as long as her life endured; and no one could so hurt her feelings as to hint that he had not been in all respects the best and kindest of spouses.

Everybody loved her as heartily as they hated him; and though they were extremely irritated that such a heartless and cruel man should have such a sincere and loving mourner, they comforted themselves by thinking that as creatures like Sternberg are not admitted to Heaven, she could never again fall into his remorseless power.

GULLS AND THEIR YOUNG.

Every bird watches over and cares for her own nest, though the numbers are so great and the tumult so excessive that it is difficult to conceive how each gull can distinguish her own spotted eggs, placed in the midst of so many others, exactly similar in size, shape, and color; and when at length the young are hatched, and are swimming about on the loch, or crowded together on some grassy point, the old birds, as they come home from a distance with food, fly rapidly amidst thousands of young ones exactly similar to their own, without even looking at them, until they find their own offspring, which, recognizing their parents amongst all the other birds, receive the morsel without any of the hungry little creatures around attempting to dispute the prize, each waiting patiently for its own parent, in perfect confidence that its turn will come in due season.

"PAPA'S COMING HOME."

BY MARION HARLAND.

Daylight—untimely victim!
  Has perished with a frown;
And Night, her stern destroyer,
  Is swooping grimly down.
Within our pleasant parlor,
  Where steals nor chill nor gloom,
I, with my blue-eyed darlings,
  Wait "Papa's coming home."

I wait in dreamy quiet,
  They with laugh, shout and call,
And sudden, fruitless sally
  Into the silent hall.
On tiptoe, at the window,
  They peer into the street,
Chiding the falling darkness,
  And "Papa's" lagging feet.

Glances of merry sunshine,
  And sunbeams in the hair,
Voices of varied music—
  He gave these to the pair.
But as the exile sigheth
  O'er wayside violets' bloom,
They stir my deeper longings
  For "Papa's coming home."

"He is never coming, Mamma!"
  O, lisping baby-tongue!
From thine impatient prattle
  What direful knell hath rung!
The wo of all most fearful
  That e'er my soul affrights,
Dread of desponding musings,
  Phantom of fever-nights!

Wouldst know, my thoughtless darling,
  Some things thy words may mean?
No shield in Life's rude battle,
  No arm on which to lean;
Some toil through all the day-time,
  Heartache when eve is come;
No watching and no hoping—
  No Papa coming home!

I know by many firesides,
  Where once sat happy wives,
Sad women bow them, mourning
  The lost hope of their lives;
While the autumn rain is beating,
  And night-winds make their moan
O'er many a husband's pillow,
  And father's burial-stone.

"It cannot be!" and wakened
  By the heart's sickening throb,
I wrestle with the horror
  And "God forbid!" I sob.
God pity smitten households,
  To which the head ne'er comes,
And with His loving presence
  Shield unbereavéd homes.

Hark! footsteps on the threshold
  A hand upon the door!
With glad acclaim, there scamper
  Wee feet across the floor.
Warm his chill lips with kisses,
  And small arms, hold him fast!
To our love's golden circlet,
  The clasp is joined at last.

A TALK ABOUT MARRIAGE.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

Two maidens, in youthful bloom and beauty, sat earnestly talking. Their thought was reaching away into the future; their theme was marriage.

"I like him well enough," said one of them; "but——"

She paused, the objection unspoken.

"What is the impediment, Alice?"

"His income is too small."

"What is it?"

"Eight hundred dollars a year."

"You might live on that."

"Live! Bah! What kind of living?"

"Not in princely style, I will admit."

"Nor scarcely in plebeian, Fanny. Eight hundred dollars! Why, father pays six hundred dollars rent; and I'm sure our style of living is plain enough! Eight hundred! Oh no. I like Harry better than any young man I have met. I could love him, no doubt. But he can't support a wife in any decent kind of style."

"Did your father and mother begin their married life on a larger income than Harry Pleasants now receives? Mine did not, as I have often heard them relate."

"Father and mother! Oh, according to their story, Job's famous turkey was scarcely poorer than they were in the beginning. Mother did all her own work, even to the washing and ironing, I believe. Father's income was not over three or four hundred dollars a year."

"And they were happy together, I am sure."

"No doubt. In fact, I've heard mother say, that the first hard struggling years of their life, were among the happiest she has known. But that doesn't signify for me. That is no reason why her daughter should elect to go into the kitchen, and spend her years in washing, ironing and cooking. If a man isn't able to support a wife genteelly, and in the style to which she has been accustomed, let him marry some Irish cook, sewing girl, or washerwoman, who will manage his household with the needed economy. Young men who can't earn more than eight hundred or a thousand dollars a year, should not look into our circle for wives."

"I don't like to hear you talk in this way, Alice," said her companion. "We are not superior beings, but only the equals of men."

"Did I say that we were superior?"

"One might infer from your language that you thought so."

"I don't see how the inference can fairly be drawn."

"*Our* circle for wives, you said just now."

"Yes."

"What do you mean by it?"

"A circle of intelligence, refinement, taste and cultivation," replied Alice.

"You don't say wealth."

"No. My father, though living in good style, is not rich. I have heard him say, more than once, that we were up to our income."

"Then, we have only our own sweet selves with which to endow our husbands. No houses, or lands; no stocks from which to draw an income; nothing substantial on which to claim the right of being supported in costly idleness. We must be rich indeed, as to personal attractions."

"We are educated, accomplished, and—and——"

Alice was a little bewildered in thought, and did not finish the sentence.

"Not better educated, or accomplished, as girls, than are most of the young men who, as clerks, earn only from seven hundred to a thousand dollars a year. In this regard, we are simply their equals. But, it strikes me, that, in another view of the case, we cannot claim even an equality. They are our superiors."

"Not by any means," replied Alice.

"We shall see. Here is Harry Pleasants, for instance. What is his income? I think you mentioned the sum just now."

"Eight hundred dollars a year."

"That is the interest on—how much?—let me see—about twelve thousand dollars. To be equal, as a match for Harry, then, you should be worth twelve thousand dollars."

"How you talk, Fanny!"

"To the point, don't I? If we are not superior to the young men who visit us; superior simply in virtue of our sex; then, our only claim to be handsomely supported in idle self-indulgence, must lie in the fact, that we endow our husbands with sufficient worldly goods to warrant the condition."

"You are ingenious."

"No, matter-of-fact. What have you to say against my position, Alice? Are we better than young men of equal intelligence and education?"

"No; I cannot say that we are."

"If we marry, we must look among these for husbands. Rich men, as a general thing, select their wives from rich men's daughters. Our chances in that direction are not very encouraging. Your father has no dowry for his child; nor has mine. Their families are large and expensive, and little or nothing of the year's income is left at the year's close. The best they can do for us, is to give us homes; and I feel that it is not much to our credit that we are content to lean on our fathers, already stooping under the burdens of years, care and toil, instead of supporting ourselves. The thought has troubled me, of late."

A sober hue came over the face of Alice, as she sat looking into the eyes of her friend. She did not reply, and Fanny went on.

"There is wrong in this. On what ground of reason are we to be exempt from the common lot of useful work? We expect to become wives and mothers. Is this our preparation? Can you bake a loaf of sweet, light bread?"

"No."

"Nor can I. Or roast a sirloin?"

"No."

"Or broil a steak? Just think of it, Alice! We can manage a little useless embroidery, or fancy knitting; can sing and play, dance and clatter—but as to the real and substantial things of life, we are ignorant and helpless. And, with all this, forsooth, we cannot think of letting ourselves down to the level and condition of virtuous, intelligent young men, who, in daily, useful work, are earning a fair independence! We are so superior that we must have husbands able to support us in luxurious idleness, or we will have none! We are willing to pass the man to whom love would unite us in the tenderest bonds, because his income is small, and marry for position, one from whom the soul turns with instinctive aversion. Can we wonder that so many are unhappy?"

"But eight hundred dollars, Fanny! How is it possible for a married couple to live in any decent style, in this city, on eight hundred dollars a year."

"They may live in a very comfortable style, if the wife is willing to perform her part."

"What do you mean by her part, Fanny?"

"We will take it for granted, that she is no better than her husband. That, having brought him no fortune beyond her own dear self, she cannot claim superior privileges."

"Well?"

"He has to work through all the day."

"Well?"

"Under what equitable rule is she exempt?"

"None. She must do her part, of course, if there is anything to do with. She must keep his house, if he can afford a house. But if he have only eight hundred dollars a year! Why, rent alone would consume half, or more than half of that. There would be no housekeeping in the case. They must board."

"And the wife sit in idleness all the day long?"

"She would have nothing to do."

"Could she not teach? or, by aid of a sewing machine, earn a few dollars every week? or engage in some other useful work that would yield an income; and so do her part?"

"Yes, she *might* do something of the kind; but if marriage is to make 'workies' of us, it were better to remain single."

"And live in unwomanly dependence on our parents or relatives. No, Alice; there is a false sentiment prevailing on this subject, and as I think and talk, I see it more and more clearly. Our parents have been weak in their love for us; and society, as constituted, has given us wrong estimates of things. We should have been required to do useful work in the household, from the beginning; and should have been taught, that idleness and self-indulgence were discreditable. Our brothers are put to trades and professions, and made to comprehend, from the beginning, that industry is honorable, and that the way of useful work is the way by which the world's brightest places are to be reached. But we are raised daintily and uselessly, and so fitted for our duties as wives and mothers. Our pride and self-esteem are fostered; and we come to think of ourselves as future queens, who are to be ministered to in all things, instead of being ministrant, in loving self-forgetfulness, to others. No wonder that an anti-marriage sentiment is beginning to prevail amongst young men of moderate incomes, in all our larger cities. The fault is in us, Alice. The sin lies at our door. We demand too much in this co-partnership. We are not willing to do our share of work. Our husband must bear all the burdens."

Alice sighed heavily. Her friend continued:

"I have read somewhere that the delight of heaven is the delight of being useful. And it seems to me, as I dwell upon the thought, that the nearest approach to heavenly delight here, must be that state into which a wife comes when she stands by her husband's side, and, out of love for him, removes one burden and another from his shoulders, and so lightens his work that smiles take the place of weariness and the shadowings of care. If he be rich, she can hardly have so great a privilege; but if they are alike poor, and know how to moderate their desires, their home may become an image of Paradise. Eight hundred dollars! Alice, if you were really fitted to become Harry's wife, you might live with him, doing your part, happier than any queen."

"That is, I must take in work, and earn money, if we board; or—but housekeeping is out of the question."

"No; it should never be out of the question in marriage, I think."

"But house-rent alone would take half of our income."

"That does not follow."

"It does, for any house I would consent to live in."

"So pride is stronger than love. But pride has its wages as well as love; and the one is bitter while the other is sweet. It is this pride of appearance, this living for the eyes of other people who do not care a penny for us, that is marring the fair fabric of our social life. Fine houses, fine furniture, fine dresses, parties, shows and costly luxuries of all kinds, are consuming domestic happiness, and burdening fathers and husbands, in all grades of society, with embarrassment and wretchedness. Alice, we must be wiser in our generation."

"That is, coop ourselves up in two or three mean little rooms, with our eight hundred dollars a year husbands, and do our own cooking and housework. Is that it, my pretty one?"

"For shame, Alice! You do not deserve a good man. You are not worthy to wed Harry Pleasants, and I trust you will pass him by, should he be weak enough to offer you his hand. He can't afford to marry a girl of your expectations; he must content himself with one who, like himself, regards life as real, life as earnest; and the way of use and duty the way to true honor and the highest happiness."

"Suppose you take him, Fanny," said Alice, half sportively, half petulantly. She was a weak, proud, vain girl.

"If he should offer himself, perhaps I will."

"Oh, then, if he kneels at my feet, I will refer him to you as one likely to make him a good cook and chambermaid."

"Do, if you please. I always liked Harry, and I don't think it would take much effort on my part to love him. He is a great deal better off in the world than I am, having an income of eight hundred dollars a year, while I have nothing. On that sum, I am sure, we could live in comfort, taste, and happiness. I would not keep a servant to wait on me so long as I could do the work of our little household. Why should I keep a servant any more than he? I would find mental recreation and bodily health in the light tasks our modest home would require. Need we care as to what the world would say? And what would the world say?"

"That your husband had no business to marry if he couldn't support his wife!"

"Not by any means, Alice. The world would say, 'There's a sensible couple for you, and a wife worth having. We'll endorse them for happiness and prosperity.' And, what is more, Alice, others would be encouraged to act the same wise part, and thus be made happy through our example. I'll take Harry if he offers himself, and show you a model home and a model wife; so pass him over to me, should he lay his fortune at your feet."

A GOLDEN WEDDING.

BY MARY C. VAUGHAN.

No event in the history of Hillsdale since the Revolution, or less exciting than the settlement of a pastor, had called forth such enthusiasm as the golden wedding of Squire Spencer and his wife. All their old friends and neighbors had been invited, and at an early hour, for Hillsdale was primitive in its habits, and the dear old pair were not to be fatigued by late-staying guests, the large rooms were crowded. John Spencer and his children had joined the family party, bringing some of the city friends of Mrs. John Spencer, and the orphan son of Robert, and the daughters of Julia, with their children, had arrived to swell the group.

Surrounded thus by their descendants to the third generation, and clothed in their bridal garments, carefully preserved through all changes of time and fashion, the old people sat in the best parlor, and received the congratulations of their friends with all the stately courtesy of the olden time—a courtesy that seemed to belong to and harmonize with the elaborate dress; the long-skirted silken coat, the embroidered waistcoat, the hose of silk, and the glittering buckles and well powdered wig of the Squire; the flowered brocade, rich, and stiff, and rustling, falling open to display the quilted petticoat of white satin, the apron of gauze, the curled, and frizzled, and powdered hair, and the high-heeled slippers of the lady. Those garments belonged not to the "fast" days of the waltz, the polka, and the "German," but to those of the stately minuet and the formal quadrille.

Amidst all the rejoicings of the hour, one shadow rested on the hearts of the aged pair. Happiness and prosperity had attended them through life. They had scarcely been separated for a day of all those years, save those few dreadful months when the Squire took up the musket in defence of his country's rights; their children had been good and dutiful; the babes they had lost lived in a hallowed memory, and Robert and Julia had died in the triumphs of Christian faith, that assured their parents that they had but gone before, a little time. No regrets for the dead troubled this joyous festival time. Of each whom they had laid in the grave, they could have calmly said, "it is well." But there lived one whose sorrow was their trial and grief—their gentle daughter, Emily, the best daughter parents ever had, they sometimes said, in fervent access of parental pride.

The light of excitement had faded from Emily's face, and the shadow that had just lifted during the bustle and pleasant hurry of preparation had settled again upon a brow that had been very fair among New England's fair daughters in her youth, and which as yet her thirty years had touched but lightly. Perhaps she thought of a marriage in which the bridegroom was young, and gifted with the proudest graces of manhood, the bride girlish and timid, glad, yet half afraid of her new honors and joys, that was once to have been celebrated in the old mansion.

Nor was it wonderful that on this night, when mirth and congratulation went round, that she should remember the hopes that had been so rudely crushed, the long agony and suspense of desertion, and the slow growth of her long-resisted belief of the unworthiness of one in whom she had trusted as only a loving woman trusts.

Twelve years before Emily Spencer had been betrothed to Ambrose Reade. She had known him from childhood, and the change from a child's affection to a woman's love had been so insensible that only some sudden shock could have revealed it to her. She might not have learned it for years, or until he had married another, or been accused of some crime, or died, or any of the thousand occurrences that, like lightning flashes, disclose the secrets of the hearts that beat in our bosoms, and hide their mysteries even from our own eyes, had taken place.

Ambrose met with an injury, not very dangerous nor painful in truth, but the tidings, gathering strength as they passed through the avenues of village gossip, reached her ears at last in a report that he was dying of some mortal hurt. She was silent, but pale and trembling she went out of the presence of her mother and the neighbor who had brought the report, up to her own room, and there, falling upon her knees, prayed and sobbed, and felt in all the fibres of her agonized being, how dear was he for whom she wept.

But when, in a little time, she heard how exaggerated had been the story that had so moved her, she shrunk with maiden shame from all self-acknowledgment of her secret. And even when Ambrose, who quickly recovered, at least so far as to appear among his friends in the village in the character of an interesting invalid, came daily to pass some portion of his enforced leisure at the Squire's, an accustomed haunt of his, she almost repelled him with a coldness and reserve as alien to her nature as to the established conditions of their former almost fraternal intercourse.

Perhaps Emily's unaccountable conduct awakened Ambrose to a sense of his deep regard for her, or the fear of losing her just made him conscious of a desire that she should be all his own. Be that as it may, there was a prolonged game at cross purposes between the pair, ending in a confused explanation, and a mutual confession of love, and at eighteen Emily, grown suddenly from a child to a woman by the awakening of her heart, became the betrothed of Ambrose Reade.

There was no haste about the marriage. Both were young, and not likely to change, or endure separation, so their parents said, and they agreed. For two years they were very happy, and then the elder Reade died, and it was found that he had entered into some secret speculations that had failed, involving all his property. Ambrose had scarcely laid his father in the grave, before he learned that he was penniless.

He must work then, he saw, and earn a home for his bride before he could take her to himself. And so, when a situation offered to go out to India, in some capacity promising sure and rapid gain, he gladly accepted it, though, at the same time, his heart sank at the thought of the long separation from Emily.

It was not until the day of parting came that the youthful pair, who had tried to bear bravely the pain and trouble for each other's sake, fully realized the dreadful meaning of this separation —all the loneliness and anguish, the yearnings and the suspense that lay before them. A moment of prophetic instinct seemed to reveal it all, and other and strong arms tore them apart from that long embrace they had not will nor power to end.

Ambrose went. One, two, three letters Emily received from him within the first year of absence, and then—silence. Months and years followed, and though sometimes an old friend in the village heard from him, no letter reached his betrothed. For six years she occasionally heard thus that he was well and prosperous, and then even those tidings failed, and Ambrose Reade was as one dead to the inhabitants of Hillsdale. Only Emily Spencer believed, by what subtle intuition she could never explain, that he still lived, but she had long yielded to the conviction that he had ceased to love, and had pitilessly deserted her.

"And I would have waited for him until gray hairs and failing limbs proclaimed me aged," she would say, "even as now old age will find me unmarried for the sake of the love that will not die, stifle it as I may;" and then, with a prayer for his happiness, she would go about her duties with the sweet seriousness of mien that now characterized her, and with all a daughter's affection devote herself to the care and comfort of those aged parents whose sole home-child she now was. No offers of marriage, no love, however fervent, and these were not wanting, could tempt her from their side. Her devotion to them was praised, but few guessed that other and far deeper reason which would have made marriage to her a sacrilege.

So on this night of the golden wedding she alone was sad. Only eyes that loved her would have seen the added shade of seriousness in her mien, but her mother knew that amidst all her duties, and all her thoughtful attention to her guests, memories of the past were busy in her mind, and none but she traced in the paleness of her cheek, and the mournful cadence of her tones, the regrets that were making such sorrowful music among her heart-chords.

And still the merriment went on. The golden wedding was a brilliant success, from the early congratulations of the guests to the supper, and the crowns of myrtle and immortelles with which Mrs. John Spencer, in the name of the assembled family, invested the heads of the aged pair, and the poetic tribute from the pen of Robert's son that accompanied them.

The young poet had just finished reading this, and flushed with joyful pride at the thanks of his grand-parents, and the applause of the guests, was about withdrawing from notice, when a loud knocking at the outer door resounded through the house. The hour was too late for any bidden guest to arrive, and anxious mothers looked with dread into the faces of their spouses, as the thought rushed into their ever-active brains of children taken suddenly ill, or houses on fire, or some of the many casualties the fear of which disturbs careful housekeepers.

But no such tidings came. Emily was called from the room, then John Spencer, then the bustle of surprise and curiosity died away, and all went on as before, except with Mrs. John, who could not resist two or three journeys to the door of the library where her husband and sister were closeted with the new arrival, but only the murmur of voices reached her ear, and she returned unsatisfied.

A half hour passed, and then her husband came, and drawing her aside, whispered strange tidings in her ear. A hurried consultation, much passing to and fro between parlor and library, a prestige of some strange event spreading among the guests, more whispers in the ears of the parents, a brief family conclave, and then the aged pair left their seats, as the door opened and Emily, in a dress of simple white, leaning on the arm of a tall, bronzed man in quaint and foreign garb, entered the room.

The stranger smiled and bowed around, and many recognized a something familiar in face and mien. A buzz arose that Ambrose Reade had returned, and many would have pressed forward to offer greetings and congratulations, but the pair were already in the place just occupied by Emily's parents, and the pastor had commenced the marriage service.

And so there was a real wedding, after all. A wedding golden in its promises of the future, as that Squire Spencer's neighbors and friends had met to celebrate was in its memories and serene assured joy.

All had been explained, and when friends and guests crowded about the newly-married pair with words of welcome mingled with joyous wishes, but one of all who had been there earlier was absent—the friend with whom Ambrose Reade had corresponded in the first years of his exile—the traitress who had perjured herself to win his love, and failed.

Years of exile, of suffering and suspense were all blotted out when Ambrose Reade received from Emily's lips that which he prized far higher than all his wealth—the assurance of an unchanged love.

BAD WRITING.

The Roman historian Niebuhr's opinion of it:—"A bad handwriting ought never to be forgiven; it is shameful indolence: indeed, sending a badly written letter to a fellow creature is as impudent an act as I know of. Can there be anything more unpleasant than to open a letter which at once shows that it will require long deciphering? Besides, the effect of the letter is gone if we must spell it. Strange, we carefully avoid troubling other people even with trifles, or to appear before them in dress which shows negligence or carelessness, and yet nothing is thought of giving the disagreeable trouble of reading a badly written letter. Good breeding requires writing well and legibly."

COUNTRY EXCURSIONS.—A short trip into the country, even for a single day, is exceedingly beneficial, by diverting the mind from the ordinary objects of contemplation, and removing from it for a time that load of anxious cares which, if suffered too long to remain, destroys its elasticity. At least once a year a jaunt or a week or two should, if possible, be taken by every one. The communications by land and water, to every part of the country, are now so abundant and economical, that there are few indeed who could not afford it if they wished; in the end such expenditure would, probably, be the means of saving a larger sum, by improving the health, and enabling men to engage in the various occupations of life with greater energy.

RECREATION.—He that spends his time in sports, and calls it recreation, is like him whose garment is all made of fringes, and his meat nothing but sauces—they are healthless, chargeable and useless.

WIT AND WISDOM.

ORIGINAL AND SELECTED—PREPARED EXPRESSLY FOR THE LEDGER BY GEO. D. PRENTICE.

THE body and soul are related closely, no doubt, but the body is often considered a poor relation of the soul, and the soul pays very little respect to it. The poor relation lives from hand to mouth, truly, while the soul often banquets in the halls of Thought with kings.

AH! how many affectionate women there are who pine unknown, despond smiling, and wither jesting; who pay for the day of smiles by a night of tears, just as an unusually transparent, clear, and mistless day surely foretells rain.

A GRAND serious opera is a tragedy wrapped up in soothing airs, to suit the tender feelings of the nurslings of fortune, where tortured victims swoon on beds of roses, and the pangs of despair sink in tremulous accents into downy repose.

MEN often dread poverty the more, the farther they are removed from it, as, the more giddy the hight to which we have attained, the more frightful yawns the gulf below.

MANY public men consider themselves the pillars of the State, who are more properly the caterpillars of the State, reaching their high positions only by crawling.

WHEN the popular will demands of a high officer what is unreasonable, his only safety is in taking it as a call to resign. He is no longer master of his policy.

SOME people, if asked by the poor for relief, are liberal of words but of nothing else. The only purses they dispense charity from are their pursed mouths.

THE ocean renders his obeisance to the moon, and the image of the beautiful idol is worn upon the heaving bosom of her worshipper.

THERE is a law of motion as well as a law of rest, and a greater virtue than the virtue of standing still. Next to faith in God is faith in labor.

CHILDREN wouldn't cross their parents so often when they grow up, if they were to cross their parents' knees a little oftener when they are little.

THE most beautiful and sweetest mouth in the world is that your sweetheart makes when she kisses you.

LET your children be over-indulged, and, if they make their mark in life, it will only be because they can't write their names.

PROVIDENCE is undoubtedly the overseer of the poor in this world, but Business is his Real Estate Agent.

A RICH doctor, who will not help a poor man without a fee, is less humane than a poor ruffian who kills a rich man to supply his necessities.

PEOPLE who are always taking care of their health are like misers, who spend their lives in hoarding treasures they lack the spirit to enjoy.

WHEN you feel pity for the poor, you do not make the most appropriate gesture by putting your hand upon your heart, but into your pocket.

FEW young girls are so inconsolable that their hearts can't be kept afloat by a *boy*.

A MAN'S valor had better flow from the ends of his fingers than ooze from the end of his tongue.

THE bigots of former times killed people for not being fit to die.

SOME persons who pretend to be dying for the truth, would die of it if they got it.

DUELLISTS must have their seconds, and widows are entitled to their thirds.

GREAT reformers are the mostly-silent members in God's long parliaments.

TOMATOES make good cat-sup, but a mouse makes a cat-supper.

HE who has to draw upon his anger for his courage is at best half coward.

THE loan of a trifling sum makes a man your debtor; that of a large one your enemy.

THE leaning tower of Pisa is the great *Italic* in the literature of architecture.

COWARDS readily engage in contests where all the perils are encountered by the brave.

HE that is too good for good advice is too good for his neighbor's company.

IT is far less dangerous to slip with the foot than with the tongue.

CURRENT ITEMS.

HERMANN MAURMETZ, while driving his cart furiously along the First Avenue the other day, ran against a rag picker's hand-cart, in drawing which the owner was assisted by two stalwart dogs; a general overturn was the consequence, and Maurmetz falling on one of the dogs, the animal seized him by the shoulder and mangled it severely before the enraged creature could be made to let go his hold.

A COUPLE of Mormons living in Utah, are reported to have got into an envenomed quarrel in regard to a wife whom each claimed to have been "sealed" to himself. The claimants at last resorted to axes, and chopped away so furiously as soon to disable each other from taking care of the wives they already had, and the modern Helen about whom they had fought ran away with a third party.

A MAN at Pike's Peak having expressed his belief that a fellow miner was a thief, the latter knocked him down with a shovel, and crammed his mouth so full of clay as nearly to suffocate him, and he was only saved from death by great efforts on the part of his friends, who experienced much difficulty in removing the clay so as to enable him to breathe.

A MAN calling himself Geissler, was detected one night not long since in attempting to steal the clothes off a line in the dooryard of a farmer in Westchester county, and the farmer quietly loading a gun with powder and salt, "pickled" the thief and preserved the clothes.

A "GALLANT fellow" known as "the Colonel," who, according to his own accounts, had fought on all the battle-fields of Mexico, was recently made much of by several fascinated ladies in New Orleans, and he in turn made much out of them by borrowing their watches, rings and money, and then running away.

AN Indian, while hunting near Charing Cross, in Canada West, accidentally shot himself, and inflicted such a terrible wound that he was nearly disembowelled, but yet with amazing fortitude the poor fellow walked a long distance to an inhabited hut, where he fell down dead.

A BOY about ten years of age, who was skating on a small bit of ice frozen over a puddle near Fiftieth street, tripped and fell, and his forehead violently striking a stone that protruded several inches above the ice, he was injured so badly that he died during the next day.

A COUPLE of ruffians got into a fight near the foot of Grand street, a few nights since, and one getting the other down, attempted to gnaw off his ear, but was interfered with by a policeman, who marched the cannibal off to the station house.

REPORTS from Texas say that the Indians on the United States' Reserve are committing horrid atrocities in the neighborhood of Weatherford in that State. They murder men, women and children, burn every building, and make a clean and desolating sweep.

A DEAD woman, with three children—two of whom were crouching and moaning by their mother's corpse, and the other—a babe—trying to obtain its wonted nourishment—was found in a wretched hovel in Hannibal, Mo., one cold morning not long ago.

A BOY about a dozen years of age, living in Baltimore, while playing in an outhouse with a chain, one end of which was fastened to a beam overhead, got the chain around his neck in some way, and was strangled to death.

A GERMAN living in Chicago, who came into possession of three hundred dollars a short time ago, spent two hundred of it for lager bier, which he drank as fast as he could, and then began a run on whiskey to the extent of the other hundred, and then died.

A DRUNKEN woman was found in an out of the way street in Portland, Me., one day recently, lying helpless on the ground, *and being snowed under*,—a violent storm raging at the time.

A LITTLE girl named Alice Saunders, living in Tennessee, ate a quantity of painted candy one morning a short time since, was soon afterwards seized with frightful spasms, and died in a few hours.

A HUT burned down near Marietta, Penn., one night, a short time since, and four children were burned to death in it.

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SHAKSPEARE NO MIRACLE.

How remarkable that of great men who lived in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, we should know least of the man of whom we desire to know most, William Shakspeare, the first of poets, the most beloved of human beings! Yet his contemporaries knew him well. Ben Jonson's poetical tribute to the memory of the great dramatist is one of the noblest of eulogies, and doubtless expressed, not Ben Jonson's admiration only, but the feeling of the age. Queen Elizabeth appreciated Shakspeare. That the public appreciated him is proved by the fact that, ere he had passed his prime, he had made a fortune by his plays, and retired to his native town, an opulent citizen. Knowing so little of Shakspeare as we do, the smallest addition to our knowledge of him is welcomed. The researches of the last few years into his career have not been wholly unproductive, and perhaps we shall do an acceptable service to some of our readers if we state, in a few words, the leading facts that have been recently established respecting him.

He was not, as has been so often asserted, a child of penury and obscurity. His father was an owner of land, a burgess of the town of Stratford-upon-Avon, afterwards an alderman, and, when his immortal son was six years old, mayor. He was never a butcher. The only trade he ever carried on was that of glover, and he ended his days as a large farmer, employing in that business a portion of his son's capital. The mother of Shakspeare was of ancient and somewhat distinguished family, and an heiress. Until he was fourteen, William attended the grammar School at Stratford, which school still exists.

It is now known that Shakspeare's father was particularly fond of the drama. Among the proofs of this is an entry in the municpal books of Stratford, made when Shakspeare's father was Mayor, to this effect: "*Item*, payed to the Queen's players, £9;" a larger sum than any other recorded in those books for a similar purpose. The same books likewise show, that on twenty-two different occasions during the boyhood and youth of Shakspeare, dramatic companies performed in the town of Stratford. The following are specimens of the entries referred to: "Paid to the Earl of Lester's players, 5*s.* 8*d.*;" "Given my lord of Warwick's players, 17*s.*;" "Paid to the Earl of Darbye's players, 8*s.* 4*d.*;" and so on, two or three times a year during all the years while young Shakspeare's tastes and character were forming. In one year—the last that Shakspeare spent at home—there were six performances of plays in his native town. These are valuable facts. They furnish incontestable evidence that Shakspeare's dramatic tendencies were not wholly accidental, but to a great extent simply obeyed the universal law of cause and effect.

The old story of Shakspeare's leaving Stratford in disgrace, and beginning his life in London as a link-boy, is exploded. It is nearly certain that he left home with a company of London players, and was regularly engaged in London as a salaried actor, in a theatre of which he very soon became a shareholder. Another little fact is curious. At Stratford there was, in young Shakspeare's day, a charnel house containing the largest collection of human bones in Great Britain, such a place of horror as Shakspeare has described in Romeo and Juliet. It has also been discovered that a large number of the names of the characters in Shakspeare's comedies were common in the neighborhood of Stratford when Shakspeare lived there. Sly, Herne, Horne, Page, Ford, Bardolf, Fluellen, were Stratford names. It is plausibly conjectured that Shakspeare's familiarity with law terms, with the usages of petty courts, and the humors of rural justices, was derived from the court at Stratford, wherein his father, as alderman and as mayor, frequently sat on the bench.

All discoveries respecting Shakspeare point to one conclusion, that he was neither a miracle nor a prodigy, but a result of causes and circumstances, a man who achieved his marvellous power by means similar to those which give excellence in humbler pursuits. Nature supplied the magnificent understanding; the circumstances of his childhood gave his mind a leaning toward the drama; practice, toil, thought, study, resolution, did the rest.

LICENTIOUS LITERATURE.

We have laws against indecent publications, and sometimes offenders against them are made to respond to justice in purse and person. This is well as far as it goes, but there are offences against public decency, committed through the press, which the statute does not reach. There is nothing more demoralizing in its tendency than the testimony in some of the divorce cases which have recently occupied so large a space in the daily newspapers. The circumstance that the disclosures are *true* adds to their evil influence. When credible witnesses conduct us into the very penetralia of sensuality and show us men and women, who, prior to the discovery of their guilt, were persons of good social, and even religious standing, revelling in shame and debauchery, the weak-minded among us are too apt to believe that all virtue is hypocrisy, and all religion cant, and to "go and do likewise."

Foolish wives, athirst for admiration, find an excuse for parleying with conscience and duty, in the *contretemps* of faithless matrons of higher social caste than they; and married men, of unfixed principles, but who have so far abstained from practical immorality, say to themselves as they read of the malpractice of wolves in sheep's clothing—"if these be your *Christian* husbands, all marital fidelity is a farce."

It is well understood, however, that disclosures of conjugal pecadillos are kindly received by the world at large, and that when the details are particularly gross they are devoured by three-fourths of the community with extraordinary relish. Hence we have all the minutia dramatically dished up. The dialogues are given in full, the "asides" artistically thrown in, time, place and circumstance duly noted. The telegraph forgets to be concise and expands its capabilities to the measure of the occasion, and special correspondents are permitted to be more than usually prolix on so interesting a theme. Of course, the general appetite for prurient scandal, stimulated by these means, grows by what it feeds on, and hence the thing *pays*.

But if this sort of private history and private biography pays the publishers in dollars and cents, it bankrupts their moral exchequer in the eyes of good men.

READY-MADE CLOTHING.

A garment is wanted sooner than the most diligent knight of the shears can furnish it from taking your measure. You enter a ready-made clothing establishment, and soon walk out with the desired garment. You get it cheaper than your tailor would have furnished it, and it fits you—as the case may be.

There are ready-made opinions, which can be procured cheaper than those which are thought out for oneself. Some churches furnish ready-made opinions to all their members. The authority of the church supersedes the necessity of investigation and evidence.

Political parties furnish ready-made opinions. What has a member to do but to think with his party?—or, rather, what need is there for him to think at all? The patriots who are anxious for office will construct his creed for him, and tell him how to vote. In fact, a good party man is not at liberty to think for himself. Let a man get his opinions from any source but the "ready-made" one, and he will be liable to be read out of the party.

"Our set" furnishes ready-made opinions. These opinions have not a very wide range. Religious and political opinions must be procured elsewhere; but opinions respecting the characters and conduct of those around us, and as to what is *the thing* and what is not, are furnished by "our set," that is, by the leading members thereof.

A great many persons procure ready-made opinions. They are cheaper—that is, at first. Whether they wear as long and are as useful, is another matter. Present labor is saved. No expenditure of thought is required. No danger is incurred—danger of differing from the majority.

Notwithstanding the numerous ready-made clothing establishments, there are those who prefer to have their clothes made according to measure—and there are those who prefer to form their own opinions.

SAVING FOR OLD AGE.

No one denies that it is wise to make a provision for old age, but we are not all agreed as to the kind of provision it is best to lay in. Certainly, we shall want a little money, for a destitute old man is indeed a sorry sight, and suggests to every one the suspicion that his life has been foolishly, if not wickedly spent. Yes, save money, by all means. But an old man needs just that particular kind of strength which young men are most apt to waste. Many a foolish young fellow will throw away on new-year's day a certain amount of nervous energy, which he will never feel the want of till he is seventy; and then, how much he will want it! It is curious, but true, that a bottle of champagne at twenty may intensify the rheumatism of three score. It is a fact, that overtasking the eyes at fourteen may necessitate the aid of spectacles at forty, instead of eighty. We advise our young readers to be saving of health for their old age, for the maxim holds good with regard to health as to money: waste not, want not. It is the greatest mistake to suppose that any violation of the laws of health can escape its penalty. Nature forgives no sin, no error. She lets off the offender for fifty years sometimes, but she catches him at last; and inflicts the punishment just when, just where, just how, he feels it most. Save up for old age, but save more than money; save health, save honor, save knowledge, save the recollection of good deeds and innocent pleasures, save pure thoughts, save friends, save love. Save rich stores of that kind of wealth which time cannot diminish, nor death take away.

LUNATICS.

Heinous crimes are from time to time committed by persons who were previously known to be insane. The murders perpetrated by these irresponsible beings are generally of a most horrible character, and they form no small proportion of the grand aggregate of homicides. Who is responsible for them? Clearly, society; for if society placed its lunatics under proper restraint, they would have no opportunity to imbrue their hands in blood. This is a matter which should engage the serious attention of State Legislatures. We want laws *requiring* the confinement, under proper watch and ward, of all persons of unsound mind. The matter should not be left wholly to the discretion of the friends and relatives of the insane. If the families of these unfortunates are unwilling or unable to place them under such guardianship as will secure the public against the consequences of their hallucinations, the State, in its protective capacity, should take charge of them; and we trust that the legislature of this State, now in session, will promptly take the matter in hand. People talk of *harmless* lunatics; but who can answer for the permanent inoffensiveness of any human being deprived of the light of reason? The sister of the gifted Charles Lamb was considered a harmless madwoman, yet in one of her paroxysms she killed her mother. It is as impossible to calculate upon the course of a lunatic, as it is to prefigure the caprices of chance.

A STUPENDOUS HUMBUG EXPLODED.

That great oyster, the Chinese Empire, has been effectually opened at last, with a knife of Anglo-French manufacture. According to the English papers, the "sacred city" of Pekin, and the still more sacred palace of the Celestial Emperor, have been overhauled by "barbarian" hands, without gloves, and in a way that made the Chinese open their almond-shaped eyes to their fullest extent. The Emperor, it seems, had assured his superstitious subjects that if the "barbarian" French and English "should dare to approach the sacred city, his fond brother, the Sun, would descend from his throne in the heavens and scorch them to a crisp with his burning eye." When the critical hour arrived, however, the Sun proved himself to be entirely wanting in fraternal affection, and left his Celestial brother to inevitable defeat; and so one of the most stupendous humbugs on the globe was exploded.

* * *

To all men the best friend is virtue, the best companions are high endeavors and honorable sentiments.

THOUGHTS AS THEY OCCUR.—No. 78.

BY ONE WHO KEEPS HIS EYES AND EARS OPEN.

People are often poorer than they suppose, as when a merchant, or speculator, or stock gambler imagines himself rich, and are really bankrupt, all except the disclosure of it. But people are often much richer than they think. They do not stop to notice the contributions made to their happiness. Indeed, men throw away much pleasure because they do not recognize it. We put pride, or vanity, or avarice at the receipt of custom. And they refuse all currency except that which is of their liking. And so, they are like an unskillful fellow who acts as a bill-broker without knowing anything about paper, and takes in much that is poor and refuses much that is good.

The French people seem to be much more sensible than ours. It requires not half so much to make them content and even happy. They do not disdain to be pleased with small things. Half the income which we spend to make ourselves unhappy, would make them supremely satisfied.

Men make up catalogues of books, inventories of property, schedules of art, and estimates of what they are worth in every element. Would it not be worth while if they would do the same by their senses, and their faculties?

We ought to open an account with our Eyes, with our Ears, with the senses of Smell, Taste, Touch, and if, occasionally, we will take notice of the balance sheet, we shall be surprised at the very little which they demand of us, and the great deal which they yield. Never did firms do so large a business on so small a capital. They ask next to nothing for themselves, and pay endless dividends.

One might begin to set down items for the eye, or for the ear, with the sunrise, and not have half completed the catalogue at sunset, especially on these short days of winter. In compliment to our running title, we mention these two senses, but will confine ourselves to one of them, the Ear.

The Ear is the only uncomely feature. It is decidedly homely. The external form may be admirably contrived for collecting and concentrating sound, but it has no relation to beauty. It is of no particular shape; it has no outline like the nose, no forms like the eye, no grace like a full, rounded muscle. It is shrivelled or corrugated. It suggests an uncomfortable suggestion of having been docked. Men often threaten children with "I'll cut your ears off." I wonder that some smart boy does not answer, "They were cut off when I was born."

Compare the human ear with the corresponding organ in a cat, or dog, or horse. In the animal there is symmetry, grace, and beauty. Especially is it so in the ear of the horse. Nothing can be more marked than the contrast of the human and equine ear. In a high-bred horse the ear is in many respects comparable to a lady's hand. It is full of graceful movements. It glances and almost flashes like an eye. It comes and goes with so many fine gradations, that it half compensates for the dumbness of the animal's tongue. The ear seems to spring right from the horse's brain, and to be the index of his thought and feeling. Nor is it often that men who own this noble creature can express their dispositions with finer lines of discrimination, or with more emphasis, than can the horse with his ears. It may be said that an intelligent horse holds mute conversation; we using the eye for an ear, and he the ear for a tongue. It is a pity the horse cannot talk. It is not for want of thinking or feeling. Only once has it ever taken place. The ancient Record narrates a brief discourse of Balaam's ass to his master, and in that the ass proved so much the more sensible of the two, that we cannot but form the most lively expectations of the good sense and eloquence of a Patchen, a Lantern; of the refined observations and feelings of a Flora Temple or Lady Palmer. None can doubt, that if a miracle should, on some fair day, open the mouth of a high bred horse on the race-track, he would give the crowd usually found there a lecture much needed and of more moral truth than the most of them have been wont to hear. And if, in another sphere, men and horses should have another chance for education, we must not be surprised to find horses changed to schoolmasters and jockeys and drivers the pouting scholars, dull and slow to apprehend the superior ideas of their equine teachers. But we must pull the rein. These horses are riding us away from our subject.

The outside human ear is homely enough. We speak of one and another having fine ears. But the praise is relative. It means that the organ in question is less ugly than the average. On the scale of ears the degrees run from hideous up to tolerable, and all praise must move upon the degrees between this maximum and minimum.

But as, in European cities, the most sumptuously furnished Jews' houses are approached through plain and, often, dilapidated courtways, so the homely portal of sound in the human head opens into rare halls and chambers. No one would suspect the treasures within from the outward aspect. The relation of sound to taste as in music; the pleasure of sound in genial conversation, are often the theme of remark. But the relations of sound to unconscious knowledge, to tact, to guidance, is even more remarkable. The ear treasures up a thousand details, which are the basis of action and judgment, though we do not recognize the source of such judgments. Every person in a family has his own cough; his own peculiar sneeze; his individuality in clearing his throat. No two men blow their noses alike. Among lame or crippled people there is a marked individuality of hobbling, and the wooden leg, the crutch, the staff strike upon the floor with a difference that the accustomed ear quietly knows without ever thinking anything about it. Nobody ever set about learning the peculiar sound which every door in the house makes; and yet we know every latch and every lock-sound. The kitchen door says every time it opens, "kitchen door." The china closet always cries out, "china closet." We know the very whistle of the wind through different apertures. The sticking of some drawers, the round and smooth slide of others, the hitchetty-ricketty pull of others, are identifying confessions. No two stoves draw alike, no two chimneys rumble alike. Hens don't cackle like each other. Roosters crow with marked individuality. We know the very sound of raiment. The silk on a venerable dame, sends off waves of sound which cannot be mistaken for the silken sound of a gay young maiden's dress, any more than an andante of Beethoven could be confounded with a brilliant trio of Haydn. While in most things men's real knowledge is far less than their conceit of it, in ear-lore it is the reverse. We know more than we think we do. The first intimation that we have of having made unconscious observations is given when the sounds cease and we feel the want of them. If one is falling asleep in a room where conversation is going on, the sudden cessation of it will rouse him. He did not hear the noise but did the silence. While busily reading, we do not hear the fine twang of our wife's thread, as she draws out the silk with a sharp twitch, but if she goes out for a moment, though we do not notice her foot-sound or dress-sound, the ear is uneasy and we look off our book to know what has become of that sound which we did not know we were hearing till we ceased to hear it. In the same way we do not notice the ticking of the old clock, till it runs down; we do not hear the striking of a clock, but we hear the *not* striking. The lull of trickling water reveals more by its absence than by its presence. Men grow used to sounds, and become dependent on them. They lean on them for support. A stranger is half-crazed by the clack and clang of a thousand looms in a factory. But the agent needs that very sound. He will tell you that he cannot make nice calculations at his house, because the stillness disturbs him, but as soon as he can hear the machinery clatter he is himself again. On steamships and railway trains I have observed the officers to be roused up when some accustomed sound ceased, and just as much when a new sound was intercalated. The ear in this case seems to be like a sentinel to the mind, and takes alarm first.

Among the most curious facts is the control which low and continuous sounds have in controlling the flow of thought. Peremptory sounds attract the attention to themselves. But soft, and gently recurring sounds produce an agreeable stimulus upon the mind, and excite the feelings, the fancy, or the reasoning faculties. The drowsy fall of rain upon the roof; a distant music; the sound of mellow voices in a room below you; the sound of trees in summer; the plash of a waterfall, or the low sound of humming bees under your window, are provocative of the imagination.

This is more remarkable yet in sleep. Sounds have power to rouse the mind to dreams, even when they cannot awaken the sleeper. The unballasted fancy springs up and balloons through all the air, and looks down upon a thousand chequered pictures that no man sees awake. And in all the dream there is a power in the sound to excite but not to form the dream. You may scare up a bird when you cannot direct its flight.

But enough for this time. Ears are deep wells. No man dreams how deep or how full of water.

THE SOCIAL HORROR.

An untidy woman! Little soap and much perfume. Plenty of jewelry and a lack of strings and buttons. Silks and laces, and tattered under-clothes. Diamond rings and soiled collar. Feathers and flowers, and battered cap frill. Silk stockings and shabby boots. Who has not seen her? If you are a person of courage, enter her dressing-room. Make your way over the carpet through mis-mated slippers, tippets, belt-ribbons, hair-pins, pictorials, magazines, fashion prints and unpaid bills, and look vainly round for a chair that is sufficiently free from dust to sit down upon. Look at the dingy muslin window-curtains, the questionable bed-quilt and pillow-cases, the *un*-freshness of everything your eye falls upon. Open the closet-door, and see the piles of dresses, all wanting "the stitch in time," heaped pell-mell upon their pegs; see the band-boxes without covers, and all the horrible paraphernalia of a lazy, vapid, inefficient, vacant, idea-less female monstrosity, who will of course be chosen out of a bevy of practical, good, common-sense girls, by some man who prides himself on "his knowledge of women," as his "help-meet" for life! I use the word "monstrosity" advisedly; for even in the cell of a prison I have seen wretched females trying, with woman's beautiful instinct, to brighten and beautify the bare walls with some rude colored print. Thank Heaven! the untidy woman is the exception, not the rule. Would we could say the same of the untidy *man*.

Fanny Fern.

OUR COUNTRY FRIENDS.

Our women who live in the country, as a general thing might as well, it seems to us, be without feet, for all the use they make of them, out of doors. We cannot but think they make a mistake in tackling up old Dobbin to convey them a mile, or a mile and a half, as the case may be, to the village store, for any little articles of home consumption. Why not array themselves in thick shoes fit for rough roads, and stir the blood by a little healthful exercise? We do not believe, how active soever their in-door occupations may be, that they can ever entirely supersede this necessity for *out-door* exercise. We have often marvelled, when chance has thrown us among them for a few days, at their slavish subserviency to horse-flesh on every trifling occasion. They seem to regard the city visitor's preference for walking, as a sort of lunacy, harmless perhaps, but pitiable. They see "no object" in going over the threshold "just for a walk." Well—every one to their taste—notwithstanding the currents of "fresh air" always to be had by every one who lives *inside* a country house, *we* would not, voluntarily, surrender the privilege of snuffing it *outside*, and snuffing it *on foot* too.

Fanny Fern.

BEAR WITH THE LITTLE ONES.

Children are undoubtedly very troublesome, at times, in asking questions, and should, without doubt, be taught not to interrupt conversation in company. But, this resolution being made, we question the policy of withholding an answer at any time from the active mind which must find so many unexplained daily and hourly mysteries. They who have either learned to solve these mysteries, or have become indifferent as to an explanation, are not apt to look compassionately enough upon this eager restlessness on the part of children to penetrate causes and trace effects. By giving due attention to these "troublesome questions," a child's *truest* education may be carried on. Have a little patience then, and sometimes think, how welcome to you would be a translator, if you were suddenly dropped into some foreign country, where the language was for the most part unintelligible to you, and you were bursting with curiosity about every strange object that met your eye.

PLUCKY PEOPLE.

If a man does a thing bravely and *well*, even though it be directly at variance with our habits of thought and action, it is impossible to withhold from him a certain sort of respect. He has courage to *assert himself!* and, say what we will, we all *secretly* like that quality, even when it tells against us. A person who goes creepingly and self-depreciatingly through the world, like a shy dog in a strange place, momently expecting a pursuing stick or stone, will generally get it, but let him "show fight," and he may choose his road, free from cowardly interruption. The most courageous wins. Our moral is—that this courage should *early* have the right direction. How many good men are lost to good enterprises through moral timidity. When the time of action comes, they are in fact "deserters." The *negative* evil they do cannot be estimated.

* * *

Good Advice.—Never retire at night without being wiser than when you rose in the morning, by having learned something useful during the day.

* * *

No man is always wrong; a clock that does not go at all is right twice in the twenty-four hours.

HOPEFUL SIGNS.

We really think there is great and sensible improvement in the matter of female apparel this winter. Dress bonnets are scarce upon promenade—that's a blessing when one never sees more than three pretty "dress bonnets" in a life-time. Thick-soled boots are voted "genteel," outside garments are fashioned with an eye to warmth as well as shapeliness. The timid who turned aside their eyes with a shocked "oh," when the first independent lady pinned the skirt of her dress up out of the mud, now go and do likewise. At our places of evening amusement, gauze bonnets, ermine, and white kidism are marks of "the stranger within our gates," or of persons with whom one would feel honored to be at variance on the dress question. Display in dress is beginning to be confined, as it should be, to the drawing room. We are glad to see this, on the score of good taste as well as economy. There are so many who can ill afford such ridiculous display, and who ruin husbands, fathers and brothers in the attempt, that as a matter of philanthropy our wealthier ladies should discourage it; we wish they had done so before they were forced to it by the present non-exclusiveness of extreme dress. However, so that it is done, we'll not grumble, though we should like to suggest that the reform be extended to children. It is not well—no matter how ample the purse may be—to bring up a child to play in velvet and point-lace. We are always sorry to see it on the little creatures whose grace and beauty need so little adornment. "I'm going to play ball," said one of these little top-heavy bunches of millinary to me the other day, as she escaped from the arms of her nurse. "I'm going to play ball," addressing me with that delicious confidence in a stranger which is so winning in childhood. Poor thing, thought I, as her stiff, velvet dress impeded every motion, poor thing, must *you* too grow up to be bound soul and body by velvet and silk. Every five minutes she was being caught up by her nurse, to brush off some stick or straw or grain of dust which had adhered to it, till all her gay good-humor was gone, and the little face was overspread like an April sky. How I longed to set her free, and let her play in "the pretty dirt." Nurses are well paid, we hope, for wearing in mid-winter those neuralgic-breeding lace-caps on their bonnetless heads; we suggest to their employers a farther increase of wages, if they are obliged to keep from pavement-contact these little lumps of quicksilver, done up in velvet, and duly committed to their vigilant oversight, labelled "this side up with care."

Fanny Fern.

TO OUR FRIENDS.

NOW IS THE TIME TO SUBSCRIBE.

We intend to make the Ledger for 1861 superior to that of 1860, or of any other year in the past. Among our contributors will be the President of the United States, Edward Everett, George Bancroft, William Cullen Bryant, John G. Saxe, George P. Morris, N. P. Willis, George D. Prentice, Thomas Dunn English, Sylvanus Cobb, Jr., Emerson Bennett, William Ross Wallace, T. S. Arthur, P. Hamilton Myers, Col. Walter B. Dunlap, S. Compton Smith, John Esten Cooke, Mrs. Sigourney, Mrs. Southworth, Fanny Fern, Anna Cora Ritchie, Alice Cary, Mary Forrest, Marion Harland, Miss E. A. Dupuy, Mary Stanley Gibson, Phœbe Cary, and many clergymen, professors in colleges, statesmen, and other eminent writers residing in different parts of the Union.

Our *corps* of contributors for the coming year will be so large, and will embrace such a variety of eminent talent, that every department of literature will receive the particular attention of some one competent to do it ample and special justice. Whether it be popular romance, scientific essay, historical sketch, scholastic disquisition, spicy paragraph, pathetic ballad, humorous poem, old-fashioned love story, timely editorial, or any other ingredient of popular and elevated journalism, that is to be furnished, the Ledger *corps* will be sufficient for the task. In fact, our contributors will send us from week to week much more matter than we can possibly use, so that we shall always have a fresh and superabundant supply from which to select THE VERY BEST. These facts, taken in connection with our largely increased means, facilities and experience, warrant us, we think, in promising our readers a family paper for the year 1861 which will be more interesting and instructive, and in every respect more valuable, even than the Ledger has been in the past.

As an indication of the popularity of the Ledger, we need only state the simple fact that its circulation is larger than that of any other TEN literary papers in the country. Its great success is owing to the fact that we secure the best writers in the country, and spare no expense in getting up the BEST FAMILY PAPER—a paper of high moral tone. The exalted reputation of its contributors, the practical and invariably pure and healthy character of all its articles, the care which is taken that not even one offensive word shall appear in its columns, and the superiority of its Tales and Sketches, have gained for the New York Ledger a position that no literary paper has ever before reached.

Anna Cora Ritchie, of Richmond, Va., and Col. Walter B. Dunlap, the author of the popular "Forest Sketches" which were published in our columns some time since, will each begin a story in the Ledger early in the new year. Mrs. Southworth is also engaged upon a new tale.

As this is the season of the year when Postmasters and others are in the habit of forming clubs, we direct their particular attention to

OUR TERMS.

Single copies, $2 per annum; two copies, $3; four copies, $6; eight copies, $12. Postmasters and others who get up clubs can afterwards add single copies at $1,50. The party who sends us $12 for a club of eight copies, (all sent at one time,) will be entitled to a copy *free* for his trouble. Terms, invariably in advance. No subscriptions taken for a less period than one year. Canada subscribers must send twenty-six cents in addition to the subscription, to pay the American postage, which is half a cent a copy on every paper. The notes of all specie-paying banks taken at par. When a draft or check can conveniently be sent, it will be preferred, as it will prevent the possibility of the loss of money by mail. ☞ We employ no travelling agents.

Address all communications to

ROBERT BONNER, Publisher,
No. 40 Park Row, New York.

ODE
(NOW PAID)
TO AN ORGAN-GRINDER.

BY THOMAS DUNN ENGLISH.

O! patient turner of the crank harmonic
Ixion thou of never-ending airs!
Foe to chromatic scales and diatonic!
Indifferent to curses, deaf to prayers,
I note thee. standing on the cobble-stones,
Remorseless mangling tones and semi-tones,

Baking our *Do* and giving *Fa* a fall,
Attacking *Mi* and violating *La*,
Dispersing every *Re* and clouding *Sol*,
Stirring the *Si* with brown Italian paw;
Minstrel of Italy, mechanic Mario!
Of the street-opera sole *empressario.*

Some let their wrathful words upon thee thunder,
Bidding thee take thine organ "out of that,"
And take thyself their window-ledge from under,
And will not drop one kreuzer in thy hat—
Nay, some, to scare thee quicker from the street,
Call loud for the policeman on the beat.

But I indulge not in such verbal waste—
I have a pewter shilling, which is thine;
So take thy time—grind on—*I'm* not in haste,
And the policeman has gone home to dine.
(Perhaps in that I'm wrong—he may be closer—he
Is very much given to yonder corner grocery.)

Why dost thou vex the air with those rude sounds?
Hast thou a spite against the human race?
Has thy soul suffered from the many wounds
Given it by men of wealth and power and place?
Hast thou some rival slain and, under locks,
Fastened his wailing spirit in the box?

Wert thou a noble in thy land so sunny,
Who did some wrong to Ghibelline or Guelph?
And dost thou wander daily, less for money,
Than as a punishment upon thyself?
Or toilest thou from love of gain unholy,
Pouring out discord for the coppers solely.

Cowper, the poet, though all debt despising,
Oh'd for a lodge in some vast wilderness;
Had he heard thee thus dole thy strains surprising,
He would have owed for twenty—more or less—
Ay, would have, that his hearing might be less hurt,
Voted himself a farm far in the desert.

Poor Robinson Crusoe, at his fortune grumbling,
Cast on an island far from friends and kin,
Were he, escaped, to hear this squealing, rumbling,
Tune-mangling, jangling, squeaking, shrieking din,
Would stand aghast, and hail the day a high day
Which bore him back to parrots and Man Friday.

Still turns the crank! Well, Job was patient—very!
Furunculi (*boils* vulgarly) and loss of kine,
Camels and sheep and lands hereditary—
All these he felt, but not this woe of mine.
Smitten he was with many woes, good lack!
But then his ears were never on the rack.

Though Mistress Job henpecked him, and Eliphaz
Tormented him, he never thought to wince;
Careless of taunts from friends and such a wife as
Some few had had before, and others since.
But wert thou there thy music-mill to grind,
Then Job had been no model for mankind.

O! sweet Italian! wilt thou not have pity?
Thou hast been torturing me an hour or more—
Hence to some other spot within the city!
Shoulder thine organ and depart my door!
Now, this is *too* much! Lo! another comes!
Is there no respite for our aural drums?

And not at all deterred this seems to be
Because a rival on the spot has been;
Round goes the crank, and—fearful sight to see!
He has a woman with a tamborine,
Who leads a little monkey by a string,
And, mercy on us! she's about to sing!

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THE MYSTERIOUS MARRIAGE.

BY E. A. DUPUY,

AUTHOR OF THE "LOST DEEDS," "PLANTER'S DAUGHTER," &c., &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Toward morning Clara was aroused from her slumbers by a violent crash, and she started from her berth with a feeling of bewilderment at the strange place in which she found herself. The recollection of the events of the few past hours flashed suddenly upon her mind, and she felt the certainty that a collision must have occurred between their ship and some other vessel.

Throwing on a heavy dressing robe, Clara prepared to go out and inquire what had happened; but Kate clung to her, and frantically entreated her to remain where she was until some one came to their assistance. She unclosed her door, and by the light of the cabin lamp saw Mrs. Pierre, pale and evidently much alarmed, slowly making her way toward her; for the ship pitched so violently from side to side, that it was difficult to keep one's equilibrium. She exclaimed:

"Oh, Clara! this is dreadful! We have not been able to outrun the storm; it is upon us in all its fury. Hark! do you not hear the roaring of the wind and waves? and that crash just now was the shivering of the mast, I am certain. Where can your uncle be, that he does not come to us?"

Her room was so near to that occupied by Clara, that she soon succeeded in reaching her, in spite of the rolling of the ship. The two crouched down clasping each other, and endeavoring to steady themselves against the wall that seemed to heave and quiver with every swell of the tremendous seas that momentarily broke over the decks above.

"I was warned not to take a sea voyage," said Clara, "and I suppose we must all go down to the halls of the mermaids to dwell in coral caves, and associate with sea-monsters. Do you think the ship can stand this strain much longer?"

"This is only the beginning, Clara. I have been at sea in as bad a storm as this, which lasted four days, and every moment we expected to go down; but we came to land safe, and I have the conviction in my mind that we shall do so now. Cheer up, my dear, for I am not frightened—only a little uncomfortable. I wish Mr. Euston would come, and tell us what has really happened."

As if in response to her wish, the gentleman referred to appeared at the cabin door, and by a series of clever gymnastics, at last succeeded in coming near enough to render his voice audible above the uproar of wind and waves.

"I hope you are not frightened. There is a pretty stiff breeze blowing, and some of the rigging has been torn away, but the captain is not uneasy. I thought it best to come down and re-assure you. How is it with you, Clara?"

"Dear uncle, I am very much frightened; and I begin to feel dreadfully dizzy with this constant motion. I wish more earnestly than ever that we had never left dry land."

"Clara, love, only think if you had not come with me I should have been alone, with no one to care for me but old Toinette, who needs help herself at such a time as this, even more than I do. I did not believe you were selfish, Clara, nor can I think so now," said Mrs. Pierre, complainingly.

"If it is selfish to wish myself safely back with Ma Nelly, whose protecting arms I should never have left, I am afraid I must be pronounced so," replied Clara, honestly. "I have no taste for adventures either by land or sea, especially the latter. Oh, dear! there goes another crash!"

The ship reeled and quivered in every timber from the violence of this second shock; she keeled to one side, and a confused sound of voices and quick blows were heard. There was a heavy plunge—a surging sound, as if the enraged waters seized upon the prey offered them with eager avidity, and with a violent effort the ship righted herself, and again went bounding on her headlong course.

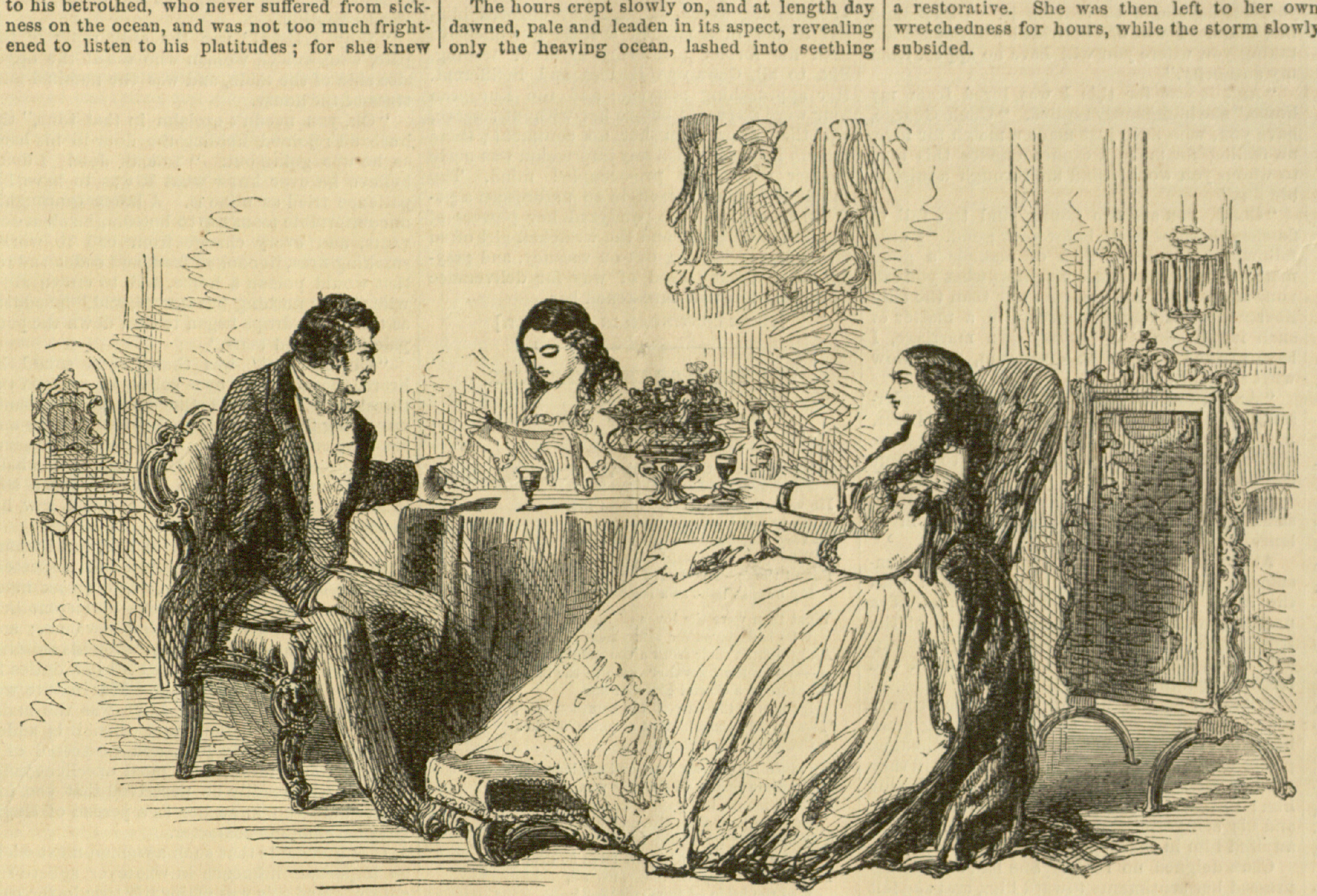
The force of this concussion extinguished the lights, and they found themselves plunged in darkness as profound as that of Erebus. Clara was not sea-sick, but a death-like faintness oppressed her, and she felt as if dissolution itself could scarcely be more appalling than the circumstances in which she now found herself placed. Her uncle sat down beside her, and endeavored to re-assure her by words of encouragement, but she was too much prostrated in mind and body to give much heed to them.

Mr. Euston soon turned his attention entirely to his betrothed, who never suffered from sickness on the ocean, and was not too much frightened to listen to his platitudes; for she knew the ship to be new and faultless in her model, and she felt assured that she could weather many a harder storm than this one, before her hour of destruction came.

At intervals the wailings of poor Kate were heard from the state-room, but she was too ill, and too much overcome with remorse at the possible result of her own share in bringing her young lady into such imminent danger, to be able to move from the position in which she had entrenched herself beneath a sofa that was securely fastened to the floor.

The hours crept slowly on, and at length day dawned, pale and leaden in its aspect, revealing only the heaving ocean, lashed into seething waves by the wild winds that still swept over it. Toward nine o'clock there was a partial lull, and an attempt was made to relight the cabins, and provide something for the passengers in the shape of breakfast.

The very thought of food was loathsome to Clara, and when the light shone upon her features, she looked so pallid and worn-out by this long and painful vigil, that her companions were alarmed. With the assistance of the stewardess, Mr. Euston placed her in her berth, and insisted on her taking some wine and water as a restorative. She was then left to her own wretchedness for hours, while the storm slowly subsided.



THE PLOTTERS AND THEIR VICTIM.

Mrs. Pierre sat just outside of her state-room door, half supported by Mr. Euston, and thus they talked over their future plans, and arranged them as calmly as if none of the dangers foretold to those who "go down to the sea in ships" could have been meant for them. The future destiny of the helpless girl they had decoyed from her home was definitely settled, and Mr. Euston gave a positive pledge that within one month from his union with his betrothed, Clara should bestow her hand on Lumley. She gaily said:

"You offer me a tempting bribe to hasten our union, *mon ami*, for I will confess that my heart is so strongly set on the completion of the other match, that I would do much to secure it."

The infatuated lover eagerly caught at the hint so adroitly thrown out. He quickly said:

"Are you really in earnest, Lonore? Would you give me your hand to-day—to-morrow, if I should ask it?"

"Why not?" was the smiling reply. "What signify a few days to us, when so much is to be gained to others by our speedy union? I answer yes to your query, but that does not benefit you much, for we cannot find a priest to unite us before we reach Havana, and when that near my own home, I shall prefer to wait till we reach it."

"I have your promise, though, if I can claim you at once as my own?"

"Assuredly; I do not retract a pledge I have once given."

"Then in my case the old proverb is literally fulfilled—'It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good,' for the captain will be compelled to put into some port to refit before completing our voyage. We shall probably make for Baltimore, as that is the nearest available place. We can be united there, and my squeamish sister-in-law will have no pretext for withdrawing my niece from our protection."

After a few artful scruples, only intended to increase the ardor of her lover, the fair widow was prevailed on to consent to this arrangement; and the hours spent in the dim twilight of the imperfectly lighted cabin, amid the lessening wails of the dying storm, were to the enamored middle-aged gentleman a period of most exquisite happiness. The fascinating Circe he believed he had won to love him for himself alone, suffered him to clasp her waist, while her head rested upon his breast, and her fragrant lips breathed such delicious flattery into his ears, as made him believe himself more to be envied than Jove upon his throne, with the imperial Juno beside him.

Toward evening the wind perceptibly lulled, and at length the ship only moved with the heavy undulating ground swell which follows a tempest. The saloons were again brilliantly lighted, the tables spread for a luxurious dinner, and the captain came down to see how his passengers had fared during the storm. Like poor Clara, the most of them were still confined in their state-rooms, too ill to move; but Mrs. Pierre had already made a fresh toilette, and appeared as serene and handsome as if nothing unusual had happened.

With the bluff frankness of a sailor, the captain offered her his hand, and said:

"You're fit for a seaman's wife, ma'am, and deserve to sail with him every voyage. Why, you look as fresh and bright as if we hadn't been within a hair's breadth of going to Davy Jones's locker. Excuse me, ma'am, but that's a sea phrase that means going down among the fishes."

"I understand its meaning," she replied with a smile, "for I am a sailor's daughter, and it would be a shame to me to disgrace my parentage. Was the storm really so severe? I have been in one so much worse, that I had little fear of this."

"Worse in your estimation because it lasted longer, maybe, and was your *first* one; that makes a deal of difference. This was the hardest blow I have been in for many a year, and once I began to fear the ship would never weather it; but she's a beauty. She held her own bravely, and with a little fitting up, will be as good as ever."

"You do not mean that we must refit before we reach Havana?"

"Exactly, ma'am; you've hit the nail on the head. I shall be forced to put into Baltimore to get my rigging spliced; it was dreadfully cut up by the wind."

A rapid glance was exchanged between Mr. Euston and the lady. He looked triumphant; but in spite of the success of her plans, she grew pale, and shivered as if seized with a sudden chill. Her lover drew near, and anxiously inquired:

"Are you ill, Lonore? or are you terrified at the recollection of the storm, whose danger has passed away?"

"Oh, no—it is only a foolish dread of those *to come* that moved me. It is the penalty of a vivid imagination to see looming in the future, evils that may never arrive."

Mr. Euston did not understand this reply, and he said:

"I was not aware that you are addicted to the anticipation of evil."

"Nor am I ordinarily; but there is a dread upon me now that is natural to one in my position. After all, I may not be able to render you happy."

"Have no such fear, my adored. I am the proudest, the most fortunate of men. Only become mine, and I will surround you with such tender care that you will be happy yourself—therefore I must be so; for a happy woman does not make him who is devoted to her uncomfortable. Is it not so, my angel?"

All that was good in the nature of this woman was appealed to by his words. She looked into his eyes; her own grew luminous and tender as they responded to the feeling he had expressed. She placed her hand in his, and tremulously said:

"I will repay your devotion with such happiness as it is mine to bestow. Care for me in spite of all that may happen in the future, and I will be a true wife to you. I will be gentle, trustful, tender as my nature leads me to be; but you must promise to love me—*love me*, through evil and good report."

"I freely promise it—nay, I swear it to you, my Lonore; though there is not a creature living who shall be hardy enough to breathe a syllable of *evil* against the bright lady of my love."

"Thanks, thanks, for that assurance. Defend me—stand between me and the cold, cold world—and I will indeed be yours in heart and soul."

She arose abruptly and went into her state-room. There she found old Toinette just creeping out of her berth, a miserable spectacle of exhaustion and terror. Her mistress administered a restorative cordial, and then went to look after Clara, whom she had not entirely neglected during those tedious hours of suffering and uncertainty. At intervals she had administered wine to her, and spoken such tender and soothing words as were calculated to reassure her.

As the excessive rolling of the ship subsided, Clara recovered from the death-like faintness that had oppressed her; and she was now able to sit up and speak with her friend. Mrs. Pierre placed herself beside her, and taking her hand, said:

"Our ship has been so seriously dismantled, Clara, that the captain is steering for the port of Baltimore, which place we shall probably reach to-night."

Clara's face brightened, and she quickly said:

"Then I can return to New York by railroad; and the storm, after all, will prove a fortunate thing for me."

"But, my darling girl, your uncle and myself have determined on a new arrangement, which will obviate all your mother's objections to your continuance with us. I am so anxious to keep my own Clara with me—to afford her the pleasure I know this trip will give her—that I have yielded to the solicitations of Mr. Euston to become his wife before we proceed on our voyage."

Clara regarded her with extreme surprise; but she found nothing to say. Mrs. Pierre went on:

"It is solely on *your* account, Clara, that I consented to so unusual a proceeding. I am afraid your mother may insist on your return to her, unless, as the wife of your uncle, I have a claim upon you. To satisfy Mrs. Euston's scruples, your uncle and myself have concluded that it will be best to hurry our marriage a few days. We shall be united in an Episcopal church in Baltimore as soon after our arrival there as possible. Then we will write to your mother, and claim you as our guest until our return to New York. What do you say to this arragement, my love?"

"I really scarcely know what to say. Uncle George should best know what will promote his happiness. I have no right to set up my judgment in opposition to his; but the charm of the voyage is over to me. I now only wish to get safely on shore once more, and return to mamma."

"I am sorry to hear you say that, Clara, for your uncle will be deeply hurt if you refuse to go on with us. After risking Mrs. Euston's displeasure to take you with us, it is right that you shall at least prove to him that you are grateful. I warn you that he will never consent that you shall return to New York before carrying out our plans of a visit to Cuba. If you refuse to accompany us further, there is an end to the proposed marriage till we reach Mirandola; for I only consented to Mr. Euston's wish, to enable me to retain you with me."

Too much exhausted to contend with the strong will with which she had to cope, Clara sunk back upon her pillow, and faintly said:

"I suppose my uncle will do with me as he chooses, and I cannot defy his authority. If he insists that I shall re-embark with you, I have no alternative but to consent, though I dread the continuation of this voyage inexpressibly. I look forward to no pleasure at its termination, for that which seemed so charming in anticipation now fills me with a vague dread that I cannot throw off. I have an intuitive feeling that evil will come to me through my separation from my mother."

"That's because you have never been so far away from her before. All these fancies are but the offspring of debility and discouragement. To-morrow, you will view our plans with different feelings; only wait till the vital principle rallies from the severe shock your system has received, and see what your inclinations will be when you feel quite well again. I am sure I would not have you do anything that would render you unhappy. It will be no gratification to me to force you to become the companion of my bridal trip, if your own inclinations are so violently opposed to it. If you insist on returning to your mother, I will induce your uncle to take you back himself, and leave me to go on under the care of the captain. It will change all our plans, and render him very unhappy, but anything is better than to incur your mother's displeasure by compelling you to make a visit which is distasteful to you. I am hurt that it should be so, Clara, but I see that the wish to sever yourself from me just as I am about to stand in so near a relation to you, is paramount to every other. Why have you ceased to love me? Why should you fear to go with me? Do you mistrust me, Clara?"

Poor Clara thus harangued, could only reply:

"Oh no, you misunderstand me—you mistake my feelings. It is only the yearning desire to see mamma; to feel that I am beside her, which makes me so apprehensive. I will not be selfish, dear Mrs. Pierre; I will struggle against these idle fears, and accompany you to Mirandola. I shall be better to-morrow; pray tell my uncle that I acquiesce in his arrangements, and will seek to give you both as little trouble as possible."

"Now you are again my own Clara," said the wily syren, and she tenderly kissed the pale cheek on which the brilliant damask had so lately glowed.

Clara was too young to feel that she had the right of remonstrance. Accustomed to implicit obedience to her uncle, reared by her mother with the greatest respect for him, she naturally thought what he desired must be proper for her, and she resigned herself to the necessity of going forward on the path he had marked out for her.

By the the time the steamer reached Baltimore, the effects of the storm had in a measure worn away, and her interest in what was passing around her began to revive. They removed to one of the principal hotels while the ship was refitting, and took possession of an elegant suite of apartments.

Mr. Euston lost not a moment in making arrangements for his marriage. A license was procured within a few hours after their arrival, and taking the two ladies in a carriage with himself, they were driven to the residence of an Episcopal clergyman where the ceremony which mated the two was performed.

The suddenness of the whole thing bewildered Clara; she had expected the marriage to take place before they returned to the ship, but not in quite so precipitate a manner. When they again entered the carriage, her uncle kissed her, and said:

"I have now a claim on you, Clara; and I *insist* that you shall accompany my bride to her own home. I will telegraph to your mother, and inform her of what has occurred: I will ask her formal consent for you to go on with us, if that will be any satisfaction to you."

"Do, if you please, Uncle. If Ma Nelly is contented that I shall go with you, I think I can enjoy the visit. Dear uncle, accept my sincere wishes for your happiness, and that of your lovely bride. I gladly greet her as my aunt, and promise her all the affection due to the relationship."

"Many thanks, my darling Clara," replied the bride, stooping forward to receive her kiss. Clara was surprised to feel that her lips were cold and tremulous, and in her dark lustrous eyes was the glitter of unshed tears. These tokens of emotion filled her young heart with sympathy, and she wondered if this brilliant, glowing beauty could indeed be attached to her plain, uninterereting uncle with that deep and true affection which, in her opinion, could alone hallow the marriage tie. She turned with a shudder from the doubt that assailed her, for it was too late now to indulge it. Love, honor, faith had been pledged to him, and for happiness or wo, these two fates had become one.

Little time for reflection was left to her; for the remainder of the day was consumed in visiting the most interesting portions of the city, and in the evening they attended the theatre. On the following morning the announcement of the marriage appeared in the daily papers, and immediately after breakfast, Mr. Euston came into their parlor with a despatch in his hand which he said came from New York. It only contained the words: "Clara can go on with you and your bride if she wishes it. I trust you may be happy. E. Euston."

"You see, my dear, here is your passport; now be as happy as I wish my little girl to be; as happy as I am. I tell you, Clara, that to-day I would not exchange places with a crowned king. I have won a queen to walk with me upon my path of life, and I am contented to be only her consort. I have now but one wish near my heart, and that is to see my pretty niece brilliantly married."

Clara was scarcely heeding his words; she was reading again and again the brief telegram sent by her mother, and feeling hurt that no particular message was sent to herself. She abstractedly said:

"You need not trouble yourself about my marriage, for I am in no hurry to give myself away; besides, I know I shall never make what you will consider a brilliant match. Ma Nelly's ideas and yours do not agree on this subject; and I consider myself bound to abide by hers, rather than yours."

"We shall change all that, Clara; and a year hence you will be thankful that it is so," said her new aunt with a bright smile. "But we will not discuss that now. If 'the dead past can bury its dead,' the living future must bring forth its fruits. There is no need to force them; they will blossom and mature in due time. Give me a portion of your loving heart, Clara, and do not permit your mother to monopolize your affections to the exclusion of other friends, who feel the deepest interest in your welfare."

"Indeed, you should not utter that reproach, for I love you dearly; and mamma has always taught me that to my uncle I owe the affection and obedience of a daughter."

"'Tis well that you understand your duty so well, and I hope you will remember its obligations, should anything arise to demand its use," said Mr. Euston.

Clara quickly answered:

"Of course I shall, uncle," but she felt uncomfortable, and did not quite understand the drift of these remarks. She knew that Mr. Euston was opposed to her union with Ashton, but as that possibility had not yet been discussed in her family, she would not think that he had betrayed her unacknowledged preference of the rising young lawyer to his newly wedded wife, with the purpose of arraying her too against her own secret wishes and those of her mother. She arose and said:

"I will write a long letter to mamma, and give her an account of all that has happened since our departure. Have you any message to send, uncle?"

"Nothing, except my thanks for her congratulations. Yes—you may tell her that I am as happy as she wishes me to be, and proud of the beautiful wife I shall bring back with me to eclipse the fairest in Gotham."

Clara nodded, smiled, and vanished.

Lonore raised her bright eyes to his face, and languidly said:

"I do not desire to return to New York for some time yet. We will spend two months in Cuba, and then, if my wishes have any weight with you, we will go——"

She paused, and he said;

"Where, my angel? Only express your wishes, and they shall be gratified."

"Ah, you are too good! Take me to Europe. I have an earnest desire to visit Paris again; to see Italy. And, besides, if we carry out our plans with regard to Clara, some such bribe will be necessary to reconcile her to the necessity of giving up Ashton, and accepting his rival."

"Exactly—your forethought is charming. Yes—we will go to Europe in the spring, and spend a year in travelling. My affairs at home will not demand my presence, and when Clara is safely married to Lumley, Mr. Spring can easily arrange all that will be necessary about their estate."

The bride half smiled at the facility with which she could induce him to adopt her views, and act upon them as if they were his own; yet a cold doubt suggested itself as to how long that influence would last, and what it could accomplish when her husband became aware of facts which the next few weeks must develop. She felt the need of some one to sustain her through the approaching ordeal, and she found means to dispatch a few lines to Lumley without the knowledge of Mr. Euston.

"The die is cast, Alfred, and I am the wife of Mr. Euston. I thought I should feel secure when the tie was once cemented by the marriage ceremony, but I do not. For the first time I begin to dread what may ensue when he learns all my deceptions. He loves me blindly, but should the veil be too suddenly rent, I fear he may recoil from me, and be willing to cast me off. Yes, I *fear it*, for I wish to be loyal to him, to live respectably with him, if I am permitted to do so.

"I have secured Clara. Come to us before the ship leaves Baltimore, as we shall be detained several days making repairs: you doubtless saw the account of the storm we encountered; it really seems as if Fate played into our hands, as this detention will afford you the opportunity of joining us.

"Mr. Euston has given me a positive pledge that in one month from our union, he will give you his niece in marriage. He is so strongly opposed to her union with Charles Ashton, that I have only to hint the possibility of such an occurrence to hasten him into extreme measures. Come, but do not let Clara see you till after the ship is fairly under way. Your affectionate LONORE."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The weather was delightful, and the steamer left Baltimore under the happiest auspices. Clara, with the elastic hopefulness of youth, had entirely recovered her spirits, and looked forward to the next few weeks of her life as promising unalloyed enjoyment. She had despatched a long and affectionate letter to her mother, and received a few lines in reply, giving Mrs. Euston's unreserved consent to her continuance with her uncle, till she could follow her to Cuba and reclaim her in person.

Not a suspicion of the true object in removing her from the protection of her mother, entered the mind of Clara till the morning after their departure from Baltimore. She was sitting in the saloon with her uncle and his wife, when Lumley entered, and approached them with cordial greetings and warm congratulations on the recent marriage. Clara was too much surprised and annoyed to conceal her feelings, and her reception was so chilling that he bluntly said:

"Really, Miss Euston, after sacrificing so much to overtake you, I scarcely expected such a reception as this. I broke every tie that bound me to your city so soon as I heard that I could reach Baltimore in time to come on with you. What's that the poet fellow says about the chain that lengthens as we go? I found out after you left, that the chain would drag me after you in spite of myself, so here I am, you see."

"I am only sorry that you permitted it to drag you on so fruitless an errand, Mr. Lumley. I thought we understood each other perfectly before I left New York, and if I had suspected that you were to become the companion of our voyage, nothing should have tempted me to accompany my uncle and his wife."

She withheld the hand he would have taken, and looked so much displeased that Mr. Euston said, in a tone of annoyance:

"Clara, I scarcely expected such conduct from you to one of Mrs. Euston's best friends, one, too, whose interests are so intimately bound up with your own, that policy, at least, should induce you to treat him with more consideration."

"Excuse me, uncle, but I understand my position toward Mr. Lumley better than you do. I am not willing to be guilty of the meanness of encouraging hopes that must ultimately be disappointed, because my interests are balanced against his. Let the decision of the law be what it will, my hand is not the price at which the estate may be secured to either party."

"There you may be mistaken, Clara: for in my opinion it *is* the price, and will be given for it yet. But this discussion is premature; Mr. Lumley is *our* friend, and as such, I insist that you shall treat him with the courtesy he has a right to claim. *I* knew that he would join our party, and that should be a sufficient warrant to you for its propriety. He has claims on the estate of my wife, which are to be settled on our arrival in Cuba, and we thought it best for him to join us without delay. As to Lumley's manner of talking, it is all nonsense, and should not be seriously taken by you."

Clara listened to this long tirade with glowing cheeks, and a resentful heart. She began to see the meshes of the net so skilfully woven around her, and she possessed sufficient spirit to resist the authority which she felt was exerted in an unrighteous cause. She calmly replied:

"I am more than willing to regard it as nonsense, but if Mr. Lumley means nothing by them, I beg that he will spare me the utterance of professions which are deeply distasteful to me. I am willing to treat him politely, but beyond civility he must not go."

"Pooh! nonsense! you will change your mind about this before many days have passed. Retire with your aunt, and leave me to converse on business with Mr. Lumley. Lonore, I beg that you will bring that headstrong child to reason. *You* know how to persuade: use your powers now, and save me the necessity of using harsh means with one whose interests I have so deeply at heart."

Mrs. Euston bowed, smiled graciously, and twining her arm around the shrinking form of the young girl, she led her into her stateroom. When there, she used all the eloquence of which she was mistress to reconcile her to the sudden appearance of Lumley: she explained so plausibly the necessity of his presence in Cuba when her own property was finally settled, that Clara was half persuaded that she had been hasty and unjust. She felt that she must endure his presence for a season, but she was resolute to be circumspect in her conduct toward him, and not permit those around her to gather any hope from her manner that she could ever be wrought on to accept him. Deception was odious to her, but Clara began to feel that craft must be met by craft, and on the events of the next few weeks, in all probability, her earthly happiness depended.

How to escape from the snare into which she had fallen was her next thought; and when she was left alone, she tried to form a plan of action which would promise some hope of deliverance from the fate she now clearly perceived was designed for her by her uncle and his wife. She knew how deeply interested Mrs. Euston was in accomplishing a union between herself and Lumley, and she began to comprehend the manœuvres which had placed her in her present position. To bring this about, Mrs. Pierre had given her own hand to her uncle, and with a sickening sense of desolation, she felt that only as the wife of Lumley would she be permitted to leave his protection.

Death, she believed, would be preferable to such a fate, but how should she evade it? She was on her way to a foreign land, completely in the power of those who had already settled her future destiny; and she felt the certainty that after having dared so much to get her in their power, they would never stop short of the end to be attained. In the seclusion of Mirandola she would be forced to give her hand to this unscrupulous man, and her weak uncle, under the influence of his wife, would be her most powerful oppressor.

Thus Clara clearly saw the evils that menaced her, without seeing any hope of release; she could only maintain outward calmness for the present, and resolve to watch passing events, that she might avail herself of any chance of escape that should present itself. After the appearance of Lumley on board, the few passengers with whom any acquaintance had been formed were kept at a distance by the reserve of Mr. Euston and his wife; and over Clara so strict a surveillance was kept up, that she found it impossible to communicate with them with any degree of freedom.

After a pleasant voyage, brightened by charming weather, the ship entered the port of Havana. Mr. Euston, accompanied by Lumley, landed at once to see about getting their baggage through the custom house, leaving the two ladies still on board. Mirandola was thirty miles in the interior, and when they at last went on shore, they found carriages awaiting them. Supposing that they were going to a hotel, as Clara had expected to remain in the city a few days, she unsuspectingly took her place in a calêche by the side of her uncle, while Lumley occupied another with Mrs. Euston.

To her surprise and chagrin, they only passed through the town, and soon reached the open country beyond it. Clara expressed her disappointment, and her uncle decisively said:

"It does not suit my views, Miss Euston, to take you to a public hotel, in the present rebellious state of your mind. If I should do so, you would probably disgrace yourself and me, by repudiating the authority I can see you are ready to defy. It is not my intention to allow you any opportunity of doing so; for I have now the power to secure your future prosperity in spite of any opposition you may be inclined to make."

"Uncle, what am I to understand from this?" asked the trembling girl. "I think your present treatment to me is more disgraceful to you as a gentleman, than anything I could possibly do."

Mr. Euston looked unmoved; in the same peremptory manner he replied:

"You are to understand that my mind is irrevocably made up to bestow your hand on the only man who can secure to you the enjoyment of the fine fortune bequeathed to you. I have such information as convinces me that Lumley must win the suit; and I am resolute that you shall never throw yourself away on a penniless pettifogger, while so splendid an offer as this courts your acceptance. I have pledged my word to Mr. Lumley, and you may consider yourself as bound to redeem it. Understand me, Clara. I will not be trifled with, and I am taking you where you will have no appeal from my authority."

"And it was for this I was lured from my home," she indignantly replied. "Uncle George, have you, who have just made a match for love, no feeling for me? I cannot endure this man to whom you would bind me through a miserable life."

"Child, you are too young, and too full of fancies, to know what is for your good. I only follow the European plan of making a good match for you, without consulting what you call your affections. It is much wiser than the silly liberty allowed Young America in a matter of such importance. As to my own marriage, I have arrived at years of discretion, and know what suits me."

"And I, too, am quite old enough to understand what is best for myself," replied Clara, with spirit: "and I declare to you that no force shall make me so untrue to myself as to become the wife of Mr. Lumley."

"We shall see," was the only reply vouchsafed by Mr. Euston, and they drove on in silence.

At any other time, or under different circumstances, Clara would have been delighted with the rapid transition from the bleakness of a northern winter to the luxuriant verdure of the tropics; but now the beautiful scenery, the vernal bloom, had no power to charm her sad and foreboding mind.

A courier had been sent forward to procure relays of horses, and at the first stopping place her uncle, in spite of her remonstrances, changed places with Lumley, and from that time till they reached Mirandola, she was forced to sit beside him; to listen to protestations of undying love, and his self-gratulations on the happiness that awaited him in their speedy union.

Clara deigned no reply. She had already expressed her sentiments toward him, and she felt that with such a man remonstrance would be useless. She mentally prayed for help, and she had faith to believe that she would not be left utterly in the power of those who were ruthless in their determination to accomplish the destruction of her happiness. Earnest petitions to the All-seeing One could yet deliver her from the snare into which her confiding affection for a false woman had lured her.

Late in the evening the party reached Mirandola. A wide avenue of stately palms led toward the house, which was completely embowered in shrubbery. The carriages were driven around an extensive lawn ornamented with statues and fountains, over which a bright tropical moon shed its silvery radiance.

The house was brilliantly lighted, and preparations for their reception had evidently been made. They passed through a gallery and hall paved with marble into a lofty saloon, the walls of which were nearly lined with mirrors. The furniture was such as a woman of elegant taste, who was regardless of expense, would be likely to choose; and something attractive courted the attention in whatever direction the eyes turned.

With her most charming manner, Mrs. Euston welcomed her guests to her home, and poor Clara wondered how a creature could be so captivating and yet so false. She would have caressed her, but the young girl shrank back, and for the first time refused to receive her tender blandishments; she now understood too well what they meant.

Mrs. Euston looked hurt, and sweetly said:

"The time will come, Clara, when you will judge me less harshly. It pains me deeply now to see that you are estranged from me, much as I have labored for your ultimate benefit."

Clara disdained to make a reply, and her uncle said:

"Never mind her caprices, Lonore. She is only tired and sulky at being forced to ride all day with Lumley. She will be in a better humor to-morrow."

Supper was soon served in very elegant style. Mr. Euston was perfectly charmed with his surroundings, and more determined than ever to bend his niece to his own stubborn will.

That night Clara slept, in spite of her unhappiness; for she was much fatigued, and the body demanded repose in defiance of the unrest of the mind. On the following morning her uncle delivered his ultimatum to her. In one week from that day she was to bestow her hand on Alfred Lumley, and they were to accompany himself and his wife on a contemplated tour to Europe.

The marriage was hastened at the instigation of Lumley, who insisted that the delay of a month would afford time for some of Clara's friends to reach Mirandola, and snatch from him his hardly won bride. Mr. Euston acknowledged the danger of this, and regardless of the unhappy girl's reluctance to the proposed sacrifice, he at once named the earliest day on which it would be possible to have the previous arrangements completed; for a contract must be written, and a portion of the fortune she so dearly paid for secured to his niece.

From day to day Clara saw the preparations for her marriage going on. She endured the persecutions of Lumley in passive silence; seeing no light, no hope of release, yet trusting in her aching heart that she would not be left to the wretched fate that menaced her.

Mrs. Euston had ceased to make any advances to her; Clara saw from day to day that her uncle fell more completely under her influence, until he only seemed to live in her presence, and the lightest word that fell from her lips was as a law to him. He closed his ears, his heart, to the poor girl's despairing appeals for release, and inflexibly assured her that he only consulted her own good in compelling her to become the wife of an honorable and true man, who was desperately attached to her.

Was there no help? Where was her mother, her lover, her friends, while this iniquity was permitted to be carried into effect against one so helpless as herself? Was there not one to rush to her rescue on the wings of affection? Her mother had promised to come, what delayed her so long? was the feverish inquiry that arose in her agitated and wretched mind. Was the letter which gave so ready a consent to this trip, genuine? With the doubt came the fear that it was not, and Clara hastened to examine it again and again, each time with the deepening conviction that it was a clever forgery, and in her heart she suspected it to be the work of her new aunt. She began to fear that her mother was left in doubt as to where she was, or whither she had gone, and amid her own sorrow, the thought of the uncertainty and anguish of her beloved mother at the fate of her heart's darling was one of the keenest pangs she endured.

Clara's personal liberty was not restricted, but she soon became aware that every step she made was watched, and any attempt on her part to pass the boundary of the grounds around the villa was rendered of no avil, by finding either Lumley or her uncle following immediately in her steps.

To avoid the annoyance of Lumley's society, she soon confined herself almost entirely to her own room, only leaving it to sit in silence at table when meals were served. Many efforts were made to draw her from this reserve; her uncle flattered her, her aunt regarded her with sweet and imploring glances, often accompanied by caressing words, and Lumley devoted himself to her in a manner a little less offensive than his former blustering style of wooing. But to all, Clara was listless and indifferent. Her approaching marriage and the European tour were discussed before her without reserve, but they drew from her no comment; there was no indication that any impression was made on her weary and pre-occupied mind. The shock of finding herself in so unforeseen a position seemed to have paralyzed her powers of thought and action, and the wretched girl often sat for hours looking out on vacancy, and praying in a dreamy kind of way for deliverance from the evils that threatened her.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

THE BRIDE OF THE CHEVALIER.

BY JOHN ESTEN COOKE.

I.

A lucky man is the Chevalier,
The Chevalier Louis D'Or,
He won my beautiful love from me,
He was rich—I very poor:
So very poor that the prudent maid
When we were weighed in the scales together,
Found the one side heavy as lead,
My own as light as a feather!

What then were the loves of boy and girl
Who had played for years 'neath the oak trees tall,
And plighted their troth a thousand times,
—When the Chevalier came to the hall?
He came in a chariot gay and fine,
I, through the dust of the common way,
'Twas a silly thought that a woman's heart
Could say the rich man nay.

He made his elegant bow, and smiled;
He came again and the day was won:
When a month had passed he was there no more
And the light from the hall was gone:
The light and life of the house and lawn
Had disappeared with the form so dear:
My pride, and joy, my hope, my all,
Was the bride of the Chevalier!

And now, good friend, do you ask again,
Why *woman* with me is a word of scorn?
I loved this girl with a doting love,
And she made my life forlorn!
She sold her maiden body and soul
For silks and jewels, and plate and gold;
Faith, and truth, and honor, and heart
—Sold, sold, sold!

The false and feeble heart gave way;
She made me the man you see me now—
With the silver in my youthful hair
And the furrows here on my brow:
She taught me then, in my early youth,
That women were false, and weak, and mean:
If she had clung to her troth—who knows—
My life—what it might have been?

For spring was then in the bud with me:
My father left me a noble name—
With love to shine on the rugged path,
I looked to the heights of fame:
And now——I ponder, and mope and dream
Through a weary life that I hate, my friend,
And but for fear of the coward's hiss
At a coward's act, would end!

Do you think I envy the Chevalier
His beautiful bride with the sunny curls—
The woman I loved with a foolish love—
Adored as the pearl of pearls?
The Chevalier is prince of the Town,
But I am king of the world of Thought—
He is welcome, for me, as the flowers in May,
To the bride whom his money bought!

And she, with a soul that loved alone
The red gold's sheen, and the back low bent
To the gilded coach—is welcome too;
She may reign to her heart's content;
She loved me once, if she does not now,
When a freezing stare would greet my claim
To an old acquaintance, years ago,
With the splendid city dame!

II.

These words I said with a bitter heart,
And thought with scorn of the laughing queen,
As I walked, with a scowl, through the smiling woods,
And over the meadows green:—
But when I met, at a ball last night,
The beautiful bride of the Chevalier,
You may laugh, but I swear, at sight of me,
Her eye was dim with a tear!

Does she think—I said—in the dance's whirl,
As she sees me here, of the hours long gone—
The hours we spent in the dear old hall,
And under the oaks on the lawn?
I turned away, for the dance was done,
I turned away with a bitter heart—
But a slender finger touched my arm—
We walked from the crowd apart.

Shall I write the words of the voice that shook,
As the blue eyes filled with a sudden tear?
The words would scarcely bring a smile
To the lips of the Chevalier!
"Alas! for the days," were the murmured words,
"We passed in the hall, by the sunny stream,
The old, old days come back to me,
Like a happy, smiling dream!

"And you—you have never married, sir—
You do not love me—I see that well:
You pity me, or perhaps despise
The married ball-room belle!
But oh! if you knew why the blaze and din
Of balls is all that I live for now—
You would know that the pearls that loop my hair,
Droop over a burning brow!

"I have pined, long years, for the present hour—
I have tried, with a trembling hand, to write;
But the time has come; we are face to face,
You shall know the truth to-night!"
And the truth, the terrible, awful truth,
I heard from the lips that were yet so dear:
She had loved me still, with her heart of hearts,
When the bride of the Chevalier.

A guardian's threat, and a feeble will,
Had made her yield to the awful shame—
She told me all with a writhing lip
And a cheek that burned like flame.
She told me all, as I shuddered there;
She begged like a child for a word of grace—
From me who longed to draw her close
In a passionate, wild embrace!

But the madness passed, and I said no more
Than the simple words I write down here,
"I love you, my darling, and pardon all,"
Then I bowed to the Chevalier:
She took his arm with a smothered sigh
And a look so sad as they passed away,
That the blue eyes wet with tears will haunt
My heart to its dying day.

And so, I have told, good friend of mine,
The story the world has got by heart,
I do not mutter against my fate,
For each must play his part:
For me, I have worn the "inky cloak"
While you may have danced in ribands gay;
But the dress is nought so the heart is right,
And we watch, and praise, and pray!

Richmond, Va., Dec., 1860.

* * *

Did all men who must die young, certainly know it, it would destroy the industry and improvements of half mankind, which would half destroy the world, or be an insupportable mischief to human societies; for what man who knows he must die at twenty, or five-and-twenty, a little sooner or later, would trouble himself with ingenious or gainful arts, or concern himself any more with this world, than just to live so long in it?

MERE NERVOUSNESS.

A SKETCH FOR LIEGE LORDS.

The frown on Arthur Jones's brow was black as night. He pushed his cup one way and his plate another, then rising he sent his chair, with a bang, against the wall.

"As usual, when I come home tired and hungry, nothing fit to eat or drink upon the table!" he exclaimed, in a harsh, loud voice that expressed, quite as strongly as his words, his inward irritation.

"Why Arthur!" was the only reply of the pale, weak-voiced woman who sat at the opposite side of the table, and was the nominal mistress of the house.

"Oh, you needn't exclaim in that tone," the husband rejoined, holding the door in his hand as he was going out. "Talk of Job! I don't believe he ever knew what it was to have his patience tried as mine is. A home thoroughly uncomfortable from top to bottom, insolent servants, and every change from bad to worse, smoking fires, ill-cooked food, and coffee and tea that would poison a horse, and, to crown all, a wife that is nothing but nerves, and," he added, as the bright drops began to flow down the poor pale face, "and tears."

"Oh, Arthur!" was the piteous sound he heard, accompanied by a sob as he crossed the threshold. He closed the door with a bang, muttering that he would go down to Barret's and see if he couldn't get a meal fit to eat there, and was proceeding to put on his coat in the hall, preparatory to going out, when he felt a soft touch upon his arm. He turned and saw his mother standing beside him.

If there was any person in the world whom Arthur Jones thoroughly loved and respected, that person was his mother, or, to speak more strictly in accordance with fact,—his stepmother. She was, in truth, a most admirable woman; and entering her husband's family, when his children were very young, had fulfilled all her duties in the most exemplary manner. Her nature was large, genial and loving. Love was the mainspring of all her actions, and when it is added that she was strictly just, and possessed of a well-cultivated mind, and a most excellent judgment, it will readily be perceived that she impressed all who knew her as a person of singularly harmonious character.

It is inevitable that such a woman must wield an important influence in whatever sphere she enters. And this was eminently true in the case of Mrs. Jones. At the time our story opens she was a guest beneath Arthur's roof, and had been a pained witness of the scene just described. It was she who had followed him into the hall, and who now laid a gentle hand upon the arm of the angry man.

Habitual respect compelled all external restraint of Arthur's irritation, as he turned and met the sorrowful gaze of the clear, serene eyes that looked into his. He waited a moment for her to speak, then said, in tones that, in their gentleness, contrasted strangely with the loud, harsh ones his voice had assumed in addressing his wife:

"Did you wish to speak to me, mother?"

"Yes, my son," Mrs. Jones replied. "Will you come into the library with me for a moment?" The habit of acquiescence in her wishes made him follow her.

After they had seated themselves, Mrs. Jones said:

"I never wish to interfere between husband and wife, but I am sure, Arthur, you are so fully convinced of my affection for you that you will, without anger, allow me to ask if you are in the habit of addressing your wife as you did just now?"

Arthur looked confused. He had all the look of a child-culprit at the mother's knee, as he answered:

"I am afraid I have spoken pretty harshly to her, sometimes."

"And do you think yourself justified——?" Mrs. Jones began.

"Maybe not, mother," her son interrupted. "But just see here," he spoke with the old boyish eagerness of self-defence, "see, ma'am, what can a fellow do when he never has a decent meal in his own house; and when he comes home, tired to death after a hard day's work, his wife creeps down stairs, pale as a ghost, with her hair tucked behind her ears, and her morning wrapper still on, and sits down without a word of interference or apology, to the half-laid table, and the half-dressed food that her servants choose to prepare for us, and shuffles off all responsibility by declaring that she is 'so nervous'?"

"God forgive you, Arthur," said his mother, slowly. "This is worse, even, than I feared. In condemning Alice so utterly, my son, has it never occurred to you that you may be in the wrong?"

"But, in the name of all that is good," Arthur exclaimed, "what has Alice to do, or to bear, that should make her nervous?"

"A great deal, my son. In the first place, she has never recovered from the terror and fright of that dreadful accident four years ago, when so many persons lost their lives in that railroad collision; when she saw the dead and the wounded all around her; listened to their groans and shrieks of agony; and endured an hour's suspense before you were extricated, alive, and almost unhurt, from the ruins of the car in which you had been seated. Then followed that long illness, then the birth of little Alice, and, in quick succession, of the two younger ones. She has three children under four years of age, all sickly, irritable little creatures, requiring constant care and patience, and awakening constant anxiety. A strong woman, of the firmest constitution, would droop under the great and unceasing strain, both physical and mental, of four such years; and Alice was always delicate. She is confined almost entirely to the nursery, for even if she were willing to trust these puny children to the sole care of a hireling, one girl could not give them all the attention they require. Her infant is troublesome at night, and since you have gone to sleep in another room, she takes little Johny to her bed, and, with the two, gets hardly any sleep. All the care of the household devolves upon her. Tell me, my son, you who are brave and honorable, when not self-deceived, do you think your conduct just or kind, or even what Alice would have a right to expect if she were an upper servant and not your wife, whom you have sworn to love and cherish?"

Arthur was silent. If any other than his mother had addressed him in such terms, he would have retorted angrily. But habitual respect kept him silent, and the restraint helped him to control his anger, and to consider the statements he had heard. The first words he said were:

"You really think, then, mother, that Alice is ill—that what I have been accustomed to sneer at, as 'mere nervousness,' is caused by, or is actual disease?"

"Produced by a great number of causes, no doubt, such as I have mentioned. The whole system is weakened by undue exertion, long-continued, by unfavorable conditions of various kinds, and I see no reason why it may not be asserted that the evident disorder of the nervous system is real illness. If not," she added with a peculiar smile, "it is so nearly like it as to be quite undistinguishable."

"Alice complained much of her heart, of pains and palpitations, and deathly sinkings, a year ago," Arthur said. "I remember I felt alarmed, for her feet and hands would grow cold, and she would seem like one dying. But I spoke to the doctor, and he said there was no disease of the heart, and that the sensations of which she complained were merely nervous. Since then I have laughed at her complaints, and sometimes have been angry at inconvenient times. And recently she says nothing about them."

"And yet she was, as you say, like one dying for two hours this very day. She thought herself dying, and left a loving message for you. She told me that since you have left her room on account of the baby, you are so little together that you see nothing of her sufferings. And she often has these attacks when she is all alone at night, and does not ring the bell because you complained of being wakened."

"Is this true, mother? Good Heavens! what a brute I have been, and am! Let me go and ask her pardon, at once. Poor Alice, poor girl!"

"And that is not all. To-day, before she was able to sit up, she insisted on going to the kitchen to see that the cook was preparing dinner properly. The effort caused her more suffering, and she was only able to arrange her dress a little, and creep down stairs as you came home."

"And I spoke harshly to her! Come mother, every moment is an hour until I can seek her forgiveness. How blind and brutal I have been!"

Alice was lying on the couch in her own room when mother and son entered. As Arthur went towards his wife, guided by the sound of her low sobs, for the room was but dimly lighted, Mrs. Jones carefully withdrew. She felt that she had no right to witness such a scene. But she had scarcely taken half a dozen steps ere a shriek from Alice drew her back. Arthur had approached his wife so silently, that until he laid his hand upon her shoulder she had not been aware of his presence in the room. She believed him far away, and a sudden fear fell upon her. And that scream of terror, followed by a long and deathly swoon, was the immediate consequence. When she recovered, however, to find her head resting on her husband's shoulder, and to hear his words of tender affection, mingled with prayers for forgiveness, whispered in her ear, her mother saw that she needed no better remedy.

An hour later she summoned the pair to a nice supper prepared under her own supervision. Arthur brought his wife down, in his arms, and she sat at the head of the table, propped up by pillows, affectionately waited on by her husband, and, though pale and languid still, with a brighter smile upon her faded features than they had worn for many a month.

When Mrs. Jones returned to her home she took Alice and her babies with her. Free from her most burdensome cares, enlivened by frequent visits from her husband, with plenty of fresh air and leisure to enjoy it, and with the happiness of seeing her children improving in health and beauty, she seemed to renew her rudely-shaken hold on life. She returned to the city, after a few months, in the good health that had formerly been usual for her.

* * *

THE STEPMOTHER;

OR,

WHO'S TO WIN.

BY J. F. SMITH,

AUTHOR OF "RICHARD HOFFMAN," "STANFIELD HALL,"
"MINNIGREY," ETC. ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER LI.

O, magic sleep! O, comfortable bird,
That broodest on the troubled sea of mind
Till it is hush'd and smooth. Great key
To golden palaces—ay, all the world
Of silvery enchantments.
KEATS.

"Sir Barnard Gaston," said the worthy clergyman, after a pause, "although comparatively a stranger, the ministry with which I am invested gives me a privilege, sometimes denied even to long and trusted friendship, to appeal from the world, its interests, passions, and resentments, to conscience; to awaken her still, small voice within the heart of guilt, and bid an erring brother listen to its teachings."

"I do not understand you," replied the baronet, changing color.

His visitor smiled sadly.

"I am no Œdipus to solve such riddles," added the master of Moultree.

"I will not leave you that excuse," replied the rector; "I am perfectly aware of the tie which exists between my pupil and yourself; in fact, that he is your grandson."

Sir Barnard half started from his chair.

"That he has been carried off by your connivance," continued the speaker; "from what motives, or with what intentions, God and your heart alone can judge. Pause, I entreat you; ask yourself, will it be wise to brave the scandal that must ensue, should you persevere in secreting him from his friends, who will leave no means untried to discover him? The abduction of Hugh proves it."

"I have listened to you with patience," said the guilty man, with well-affected calmness. "The idea of my plotting the abduction of the son of a stranger is simply preposterous. If, as you state, he is my grandson, I am his natural guardian, have every right——"

"Not the right of violence," interrupted the clergyman.

"Upon that point we will not dispute," answered the baronet, coldly. "I guess into whose hands Hugh has fallen, and shall instantly take legal means to recover him. I have no fear for his safety," he added, with a smile; "the conspirators would pause before they offered violence to the heir of Sir Barnard Gaston."

The rector would have spoken again, but the master of the house prevented him by ringing the bell, and directing the servant to call the Rev. Mr. Hansler's carriage.

"The chaise is still waiting," replied the footman.

His master bowed with ceremonious politeness, and left the room.

"Obdurate man!" murmured the clergyman, as he drove towards Wicksal. "Has he forgotten that the evil-minded shall be confounded in their wickedness? I have done my duty—the rest is in the hands of Providence. Where can Mr. Craw be? why is he not here? I thought to have seen him. Heaven help the poor boy! I would not willingly return to Woodfal without him."

These and similar reflections occupied his mind till he arrived at the Gaston Arms in the village, where he dismissed the chaise, intending to take the coach for London. He had not been long in the hotel before the waiter brought him a card with the name of Doctor Trevanion upon it.

"It cannot be for me—I do not know the gentleman," said the rector, reading it; "yet, stay," he added, "I will see him."

Our readers' old acquaintance was ushered in.

Doctor Trevanion, it will be remembered, was a warm friend to Lady Cheverly, to the murdered Bella, mother of William Earl, and to Collin Craw.

"You have had a long and, I fear, a very fruitless journey," said the doctor, shaking him warmly by the hand; "but if you will accompany me, I shall be delighted to introduce you to several friends."

"Impossible, my dear sir! I am already half dead with fatigue and disappointment; in two hours, the waiter tells me, the mail starts for London—besides, I know no one in this place."

"Not Mr. Craw?" whispered his visitor.

"Is he here?" exclaimed the worthy clergyman, greatly delighted; "but I ought not to feel surprised. It would have been strange indeed if he had deserted the poor boy."

"Strange, indeed!" repeated his visitor.

"How did you hear of my arrival?"

"Not a movement can be made, or a stranger arrive in Wicksal," replied Trevanion, "without the friends of William Earl being made acquainted with the fact. But this is no place for explanation. Accompany me to Brook House, where you will find those who anxiously expect your presence, and much that you are ignorant of explained."

The clergyman unhesitatingly complied with his request, and they drove from the Gaston Arms together. As they quitted the hotel, a man dressed like a farmer whispered a few hasty words in the ear of the doctor.

"Good!" exclaimed the latter, in a tone of satisfaction; "excellent! but do not relax your vigilance."

The man replied by a look of intelligence, and entered the inn again.

Brook House, as our readers may recollect, was the residence of Squire Beachum—one of those quaint old country mansions peculiar to England—half chateau, half farm. Had a painter been consulted for the site, he could not have selected a more lovely spot to place it in; and the approach, a fine avenue of elms, was equally beautiful. A murmur of admiration generally escaped from those who beheld it for the first time, as the quaint gables and terraces broke upon the sight—a picture of an English gentleman's home—a house with the traditions of generations attached to it. There was something aristocratic even in the rooks as they wheeled lazily over the woods; they did not caw like vulgar, upstart birds; but in mellow, unctuous, cathedral-like notes.

On the arrival of the doctor and his companion at the house the squire met them in the hall, and shook the latter warmly by the hand.

"Not here, my dear sir," he exclaimed, as his guest was about to speak. "Follow me, and everything shall be explained."

In the library the tired traveller found Collin Craw, the Templar, and, to his great surprise, one of his lost pupils—Hugh.

"Don't be angry with me," exclaimed the boy. "I knew it was wrong, and felt the pain my absence must have occasioned you."

"It has, indeed," said his tutor.

"It would have been explained long before this," observed the lawyer, "had you not quitted the rectory so soon after your return. My letter has been there these three days, with one from Hugh."

"But why remove him?"

"They told me it would save the life of Wiliam," replied the youth. "Could I do less? Did he not risk his life for me?"

The explanation that followed informed his tutor what our readers, doubtless, have already divined—that he yielded to the entreaties of Collin Craw, and quitted the rectory. The grateful youth needed no other inducement than the hope of serving his preserver.

"I fear," said the clergyman, mournfully, "that the means will fail. Sir Barnard is no ordinary schemer; he threatens to invoke the authority of the chancellor to recover his grandson."

"Let him," exclaimed Collin; "let him! Every step he takes is watched, and, could we only discover where he has concealed the boy——"

"It is discovered," interrupted Trevanion. "As I drove from Wicksal, one of the officers you brought from London with you informed me of two things.

"The first, the arrival of Beckford from Penswick."

"A bad man," observed the squire, "capable of any act of rascality."

"The second," continued his informant, "that the baronet had ordered a chaise and four to be in waiting at West Lodge to-morrow night."

"And where is West Lodge?" inquired the clergyman, eagerly.

"A few miles from Wicksal," answered Edward; "formerly the principal seat of my family, but deserted as a residence since the erection of Moultree, and only occupied occasionally as a hunting-box. It is a rambling old place, at one time fortified. I wonder," he continued, "that I never thought of it, for something convinces me William is there."

"Is he?" exclaimed Collin, with a smile; "then we will soon find him out. We must be prepared. I divine the design of his unnatural grandfather. He has taken alarm at the visit of Mr. Hansler, suspects, most probably, that we are in the neighborhood, and would remove him."

"That must be prevented," observed Mr. Beachum.

"How?" asked the clergyman.

"By rescuing him at the very moment they attempt to take him away," replied the Templar. "Our worthy friend here," he added, pointing to the Squire, "has already backed the warrant I had the precaution to bring with me from London, and we have experienced officers ready to execute it."

"Still we must be wary," suggested Collin Craw, "and not quit this hospitable abode till to-morrow night. Were our presence in Wicksal known, the plan might be frustrated."

"Till to-morrow!" repeated Hugh, with a sigh. "Poor William! poor mother!"

His tutor had not the courage to wound his affectionate heart by describing the fearful scene he had witnessed at Moultree.

"You must let me go with you!" continued the youth, as if moved by some sudden impulse. "I know the woods round West Lodge; I frequently rode there with my grandfather."

"You forget there may be danger, dear Hugh!" observed the Templar.

"I do not fear it!" urged the boy. "You must take me with you. I shall go mad if left here alone awaiting the weary hours for your return, imagining I know not what misfortunes. Pray—pray, let me accompany you!"

The request was urged so vehemently, that even the Doctor thought it advisable to comply with it.

Hugh had evidently fixed his heart upon being present at the liberation of William.

The consultation was broken off by the arrival of Trevanion's servant with a note from Moultree.

"Sir Barnard wishes to see me," said the doctor, after perusing it.

"Some one ill?"

"He does not say."

"My poor mother!" exclaimed Hugh, turning exceedingly pale; "she has heard of my disappearance from the rectory. She is ill. Dying, perhaps—dying!"

"I will see Mrs. Gaston," said Trevanion, taking him by the hand, "and, if I find it as you imagine, relieve her mind by informing her of your safety."

This promise somewhat tranquilized the boy, who already began to count the hours to the following night, when he was to assist in the liberation of his friend.

"They have nearly passed," replied the Templar. "Patience! patience!"

The captive bird, that beats its tender wings against the pitiless bars of a narrow cage, and wastes its strength in fruitless efforts to escape, could not have suffered more than William Earl endured within his prison chamber. And yet it was not fear that oppressed him; he possessed too high a spirit to permit the phantom terrors of an excited imagination to crush his energies and hopefulness. It was the sudden separation from all he loved; the exchange of active, schoolboy life for solitude; the silence that reigned around; the sight of the strongly-barred door, whose massive bolts had mocked his frantic efforts; and the grated window, through which the cold, gray clouds, or dull, blue sky alone were visible, that exhausted his powers of endurance and filled his young heart with despair.

The unnatural grandfather had not had the humanity to direct even a few books to be supplied him, to while away the long and dreary hours of captivity.

As for his jailer, one might as well have attempted to gather peaches from crab-apples as expect an act of kindness or pity from Miles Goring!

It was the second night of his imprisonment, and the poor boy had thrown himself—without undressing—upon the bed, and slept. To judge from the smile that lit his pale, expressive countenance, his dreams were happy ones.

In imagination, probably he was once more at the rectory, surrounded by his schoolfellows, or wandering arm-in-arm with Hugh beneath the elm trees in the old churchyard, listening and exchanging the mutual confidence of youth—that golden age, in which the heart knows no guile, and the buds of passion give no promise of the bitterness of their future fruit.

The light of a cold, gray morning had already penetrated the bars of his chamber window, when the youth was startled by the sound of the massive door grating upon its hinges, and he roused himself to listen.

To his surprise, the maimed and crippled being he had seen in the hall below, basking before the fire on the night of his arrival, crept stealthily into the room.

"Can he be sent to murder me?" thought William.

Instead of approaching the bed, the unfortunate idiot bared his legs and feet, and pointed to the fearful scars the tortures inflicted on him by Miles Goring, had left.

"Horrible!" ejaculated the prisoner, aloud; "what fiends could perpetrate such cruelty?"

The locksmith placed his finger upon his lips.

"What can he mean?" added the speaker. "I could almost imagine that he understood me."

"Hush!" said his visitor.

"*He does understand*," exclaimed our Hero.

"Hush!" repeated the cripple. "I have risked my life to come to you."

"But how gained you admission?"

"I sleep every night upon the stairs. Miles or his wife bars me in."

"The lower door, then, is fastened?"

"Secured—beyond even my skill to pick!" answered the locksmith; "and, were it wide open, it would avail me nothing. I am doomed, as you perceive, henceforth to crawl upon the earth like a reptile, or some creeping thing. I have suffered for my sins—God knows how dearly I have suffered!"

"From my soul I pity you!" said the kind-hearted boy.

"You must do more!"

"What more can I do?"

"Revenge me!" replied Andrews, "upon your enemies and mine—on your unnatural grandfather, upon Miles Goring and his confederate villain, Humphrey Skillet!"

"The wretch I saw when I arrived?"

His visitor nodded in the affirmative.

"How am I to avenge you?" asked William Earl, "I, a prisoner like yourself? You spoke, too, of my grandfather; do you mean Sir Barnard?" he added.

"The tyrant—the villain!"

"You are mistaken," said our hero. "I am not Hugh Gaston."

"I tell you that you are his grandson!" replied the crippled wretch. "I heard Humphrey explain it all to his companion. You were born in Wicksal poor-house. There is a mark upon your shoulder. Your mother was murdered by him and Miles; they confessed it all—all before me! and the fool, the idiot, the object of their daily, hourly brutality and scoffs, can hang them—hang!" he then repeated with increased excitement, "hang them!"

So wild and improbable did the assertions of his uncouth visitor appear, the youth naturally concluded the momentary gleam of reason had passed away, and the mind of the speaker was once more wandering. The only thing that really startled him was the allusion to the mark he had bore from infancy.

"Poor, wretched man!" he murmured. "Heaven pity him!"

"You think me mad," exclaimed Andrews, struggling to repress the violence of his emotion. "I have endured enough to make me so: years—long years (I cannot count them)—a prisoner. Crippled as you see me, I have almost lost the use of speech, and doubt whether I am human. Question me. You will find that I am not quite deprived of reason. The wretches, plunged in drunken sleep beneath us, utter their darkest secrets before me; that is how I learnt you were the grandson of Sir Barnard Gaston—how Humphrey Skillet and Miles Goring were the murderers of your mother!"

On hearing the terrible assertion a second time repeated, the very life-blood seemed to fly from the heart of William.

"Murdered!" he shrieked. "My mother!—my own dear mother! Horrible! horrible!"

Terrified at the effect his words had produced, the locksmith crept to the foot of the winding staircase, and listened. All was still. The besotted jailers had not heard the cries.

"And I," sobbed the boy, "a prisoner in the hands of these wretches, unable to avenge her!"

"Speak of vengeance," whispered the cripple, hoarsely. "I like to hear the word. For years I have muttered it to myself in the silence of the night—screamed it forth when the tempest and the thunder-peal shook this den of guilt and cruelty, and none but the ministers of wrath who ride the storm could hear it. Vengeance!" he repeated. "Yes, yes! it was worth enduring to be kicked and gibed at, treated like a wild beast for that! There is one good in the world. I shall find it at last—at last!

"You may trust me," he continued, after a pause, during which he had gradually become more calm. "I will prove to you that I am sane. You were deluded from the school in which your friends had placed you, by a female, the wife of miles Goring?"

"True."

"Under pretense of hearing a communication respecting your mother?"

"True," repeated William.

"Forced into a carriage, half-stifled by the villain employed to ensnare you, and brought down to this accursed den, where you recognized the name of your persecutor from the armorial devices sculptured on the oak panels in the hall?"

"Every word you have uttered," said the youth, "is strictly true."

"Have you friends?" inquired the cripple, anxiously.

"Firm and affectionate ones," replied the prisoner. "My kind, dear guardian, I am certain, is most anxious to discover me."

"Is he rich?"

"I have every reason to believe so."

"And will he know your writing?"

"Undoubtedly."

The locksmith drew a sheet of crumpled paper from his pocket, together with a pen and a small portion of ink in a phial, which he had contrived to secrete unobserved by his jailers, and placed them in the hands of William who received them eagerly.

"Write," he said; "you have no time to lose, for Miles's wife will soon be stirring, and, although she is far from being evil in herself, terror of her husband makes her act as he desires. Write," he added; "I will contrive some means to send it."

The imprisoned boy eagerly traced a few lines, describing his position, then suddenly paused.

"What is the name of this place?" he inquired.

"West Lodge."

"And it belongs to Sir Barnard Gaston?"

"To that bad, bad man."

Again William wrote, and in a few minutes concluded his letter.

"You must promise me," said the man, "that when restored to liberty you will never let your friends rest till they have rescued me from this infernal place; that whatever may occur, you will not betray me. Should Miles and Humphrey Skillet suspect my madness to be feigned, they would murder me."

"No! no!" exclaimed the horror-stricken youth, "impossible!"

"Their safety would demand it," observed the cripple, calmly. "I can hang them."

As he pronounced the last words, his eyes flashed with vindictive fire, and he chuckled wildly at the delightful anticipation of seeing his tormentors expiate their cruelties to him upon the gibbet.

It had been his dream in many a solitary hour.

Before leaving the chamber, the locksmith drew from his ragged vest a long, sharp-pointed piece of iron, which, with infinite labour he had fashioned into something like a stiletto, and placed it in the hand of William.

"If you are attacked before your friends can arrive," he whispered, "defend your life dearly; I shall be upon the watch! the cripple will assist you! but use it only at the last moment—remember, the very last."

Having uttered this caution, Zachariah Andrews crept to the head of the turret stairs, and closed the door carefully after him. The captive heard him for several minutes fumbling at the lock, which he had contrived to open with a piece of twisted wire; at last the bolt shot into the socket and all was still.

CHAPTER LII.

You may as well use question with the wolf,
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb!
You may as well do anything most hard,
As seek to soften that, than which what's harder?
His Jewish heart. SHAKSPEARE.

None but those who have tasted the bitterness of captivity can imagine the sense of loneliness which succeeded the visit of the locksmith. During the day William repeatedly asked himself whether it had not been a dream, or if not a dream, the wanderings of an overwrought brain; but no, the rude weapon the cripple had placed in his hands was a proof, a tangible proof of its reality; he had seen, spoken with the man, and listened to his terrible disclosures.

His mother had been murdered, and he was a prisoner in the hands of the assassins.

"It will be my fate," he murmured, frequently; "the wretches who showed themselves so pitiless to the parent will not spare the son. My grandfather, too! Is he my grandfather? Nature would say it is impossible; my heart rejects him, and yet the rest of the tale was consequent. If true, Hugh must be my brother.

"He will never know," he added, sorrowfully, "how close, how dear the tie between us. Why should Sir Barnard persecute me? Why sacrifice one grandson and cherish the other? What have I done, what ignorant sin committed, to merit such unnatural hate?"

Such were the questions the agitated youth repeated to himself a hundred times during the long day, the monotony of which was broken only by the visit of Miles, who came, as usual, to bring his food.

"There," said the ruffian, as he placed the basket containing his repast upon the table, "yer can't say as I starve yer."

William shuddered visibly at the sound of his voice.

"Chicken," continued his jailer, enumerating the articles, "bread, apples and wine. Aint they nice?"

"I am not hungry," replied the prisoner.

"Aint yer, though? Ah, dainty, maybe. Like old Zach. below, better fed nor taught."

And the fellow indulged in a loud chuckle at what he considered an excellent joke.

"You may take them away."

"Yer must eat," said Miles. "I've got orders to see yer does."

"From whom?"

"That's my affair."

"From Sir Barnard—from my grandfather, perhaps."

The ex-landlord of the Travellers' Rest regarded him with a look of surprise. He could not understand how his prisoner had acquired the last piece of information, which he had only learnt himself from Humphrey Skillet.

"Grandson!" he repeated. "Ho! ho! ho! The grandson of Sir Barnard Gaston born in Wicksal workus—a likely thing, indeed! Ha! ha! ha! But I can't stand no nonsense. Yer must eat; yer have gotten a long ride afore yer."

"Where to?" demanded William, anxiously.

"Those who take yer know."

"To the lake, perhaps," exclaimed the youth, greatly excited, "where my poor mother was murdered."

The words had no sooner escaped his lips than he became sensible of his imprudence, for Miles stood glaring upon him with an expression of mingled fear and rage.

"Who told yer that lie?" he demanded.

The prisoner remained silent.

"Oh, yer won't tell me, won't yer?" said the brute, collecting himself. "I'll find a way to make yer," he added, springing upon him and grasping him by the throat. "Where did yer hear it? Tell me, or I'll wring the life out on yer. Who told yer that lie?"

The ruffian forgot, in his brutal excitement, that it was impossible for the poor boy to reply to his question, whilst he kept his iron hand so firmly fixed upon his neck, forgot that his employer and confederate were both below, and that the former might disapprove of his violence.

In youth the love of life is naturally strong, and William Earl was not so spiritless as to resign it without a struggle. His strength, however, would have availed him but little, had he not recollected the parting gift of the locksmith. To draw it from his vest, and strike his assassin with it in the chest, was the thought and act of an instant.

At first Miles only felt the blow, and uttered a curse, but an instant or two afterwards he both saw and felt the blood, and his cowardly ferocity became instantly subdued.

As William struck a second time, he relinquished his grasp, and staggered to the bed, shouting for help, and murder.

"Great Heaven!" demanded the baronet, who rushed into the chamber, followed by Humphrey, "what has occurred?"

He might well ask the question, for in the centre of the room stood the resolute boy, holding in his hand the weapon, and the man who had so nearly taken his life bleeding, and clinging for support to the bed.

"The cub has nearly done for me," growled Miles.

"Wretched youth," said the baronet, sternly, "what have you done?"

"Do not approach me!" exclaimed William, his eyes flashing fire. "You have nearly driven me mad by your cruelty. I will not be murdered unresistingly, as my poor mother was, by these villains, but defend my life!"

"Ridiculous!" replied his grandfather, who, up to the present moment, suspected his own son of the crime.

"It's a lie!" roared Humphrey Skillet, pale as death.

"I told him it wor a lie!" muttered Miles; "but it's no use. He knows all about it, and can hang yer, if once he gets loose from here!"

It was fortunate for our hero that the employer of the two ruffians was present, or the tenure of his existence would not have been worth an hour's purchase.

There was no need to ask for further explanation; the torn collar, the bloodshot eyes, and marks of the ruffian's murderous grasp upon the neck of the youth, indicated sufficiently the brutal treatment he had been subjected to.

"Assist your companion from the room," said sir Barnard, angrily.

"And return?" asked Humphrey.

"No, I will descend to you."

No sooner was William relieved from the presence of his mother's assassins, than he dropped the weapon, and throwing himself at his grandfather's feet, entreated to be informed how he had unwillingly offended him.

"Grandfather!" exclaimed the astonished man; "what dreamer has put that folly into your head? You are no grandson of mine—no!"

"Do not disgrace your gray hairs by a falsehood," interrupted the boy; "do not destroy the reverence that should wait on age. I know that my words are truth."

"And who told you this fine tale, young gentleman?" demanded the baronet. "But I need not ask—those who have reared you in deception, trained you for their own vile purposes, as the instrument to work the dishonor of my name. They little know me," he continued, scornfully; "I can protect it still. I pity more than I blame you."

There was something in the courageous spirit the prisoner had shown that touched the iron thing the owner of Moultree called his heart, more than the most eloquent supplications could have done, and he quitted the chamber to avoid listening to its promptings, muttering, as he descended the stairs, "Would Hugh were like him!"

But Hugh was the heir of his mother's estates, as well as of his grandfather's title, and the ambitious man had sworn to recoil from no means to prevent their being separated.

On descending to the hall, Sir Barnard found Miles seated on one of the large, roomy, oaken settles, holding a napkin to his breast, and his wife wringing her hands beside him.

"Send for Dr. Trevanion," gasped the wounded ruffian.

Humphrey never offered to stir; it naturally struck that very astute personage that, if his confederate in crime bled to death, there would be one witness less to the act which placed his life in jeopardy.

"The doctor; cuss yer; can't yer go for him?"

Mrs. Goring drew her shawl around her, and prepared to leave the tower.

"Where are you going?" demanded the baronet.

"To Wicksal," replied the woman, timidly.

"Remain where you are."

"But he will bleed to death."

"Stop it as best you can. If he dies, it will be the fitting punishment of his brutality."

Andrews, who was basking before the fire, gave a loud chuckle.

"That's yer gratitude, is it?" grunted Miles. "Service is no inheritance. Wait till I get well; we shall see—we shall see!"

"Dog!" exclaimed his employer, "reptile! dare you threaten me? Were I to crush you—trample the little that remains of the life, ten times forfeited to the gibbet, beneath my feet, it would be no more than your insolence well merits! Who told you to threaten and ill-use the boy—to lay a hand upon his person, much less attempt to murder him?"

"Have you done this, Miles?" sobbed his wife, bursting into a flood of tears. "Bad as you are, I scarcely thought you capable of such wickedness!"

The subdued and humbled ruffian looked imploringly first in her face, then in that of Humphrey.

"Do what you can for him," said Sir Barnard Gaston, as he stalked out of the room; "but no doctor must be sent for till the youth has been removed from West Lodge."

It was something fearful to witness the fierce, vindictive look that Miles threw after him as he disappeared.

"Have you any linen?" demanded Skillet, in a tone of well-acted sympathy, of Mrs. Goring; "no matter how old—the older the better."

"There is plenty in the room above," replied the woman. "I will go and fetch it."

She was about to quit the hall when the voice of her husband recalled her.

"Don't leave me," he shrieked. "I won't be left. He wants to murder me, I tell yer. Stay here!—here, close beside me!"

"Oh, Miles! Miles!"

"He raves," observed Humphrey. "Poor fellow! poor fellow! Go and get the bandages."

Despite the entreaties, threats and imprecations of the wounded man, his wife quitted the room to see what was required.

Again the cripple rolled and tossed about in his usual place upon the hearth. The doubts of Miles, and the quiet, cat-like manner of the master of Wicksal poor-house, amused him exceedingly.

"Let me see your wound," said the latter, placing his hand on the blood-stained napkin, and attempting to remove it.

"Yer sha'n't! yer sha'n't!"

"You must be persuaded," continued his dear friend, at the same time forcibly wrenching it from him. "There! there! I can't see it now—and now——"

The ex-landlord of the "Travellers' Rest" uttered a piercing shriek as the wretch introduced the blade of the long knife he had concealed up his sleeve into the gaping wound, and coolly plunged it further.

"Curse yer! curse yer!"

"All for your good," said Humphrey Skillet. "Have you forgotten," he added, placing his lips close to the ear of his victim, "how frequently you have threatened me with the gallows? Fool! did you think me weak or cowardly enough to live eternally in fear?"

"Mercy! mercy!" groaned Miles.

"Don't believe we either of us know the meaning of the word," replied the assassin, in a tone of bitter mockery—"there, it will soon be over."

After giving a last thrust, to complete the work of crime, Humphrey withdrew the knife, and looked cautiously around him.

The locksmith slept.

A few moments' reflection followed, during which the murderer decided upon the part he had to act. After dropping the knife between the loose oaken panel that skirted the hall and the wall, he walked to the door of the stairs, and called to Mrs. Goring.

"You must be quick, if you wish to see Miles alive."

In her haste to descend, the woman fell. Humphrey chuckled audibly as he heard the noise.

Several minutes elapsed before the wife of Miles came limping into the room.

"Too late!" exclaimed the hypocrite; "I fear you are too late. Just after you left the room, in his impatience, he removed the napkin; a rush of blood followed, and he expired."

"May Heaven forgive him!" sobbed Mrs. Goring, sinking upon her knees beside the body. "His sins, I fear, were many."

"Amen," repeated Humphrey, to the last part of her ejaculation. "He did not treat you as you merited."

"Would it were only that!"

So cleverly had the crime been managed, that the simple creature never for an instant but suspected her husband had met his death from the first wound, inflicted by William Earl in self-defence, and, overcome by her feelings, as well as by the injuries she had received from her late fall, she tottered, rather than walked, to her own room.

The assassin smiled a second time, as he looked after her; then quitted the hall to acquaint his employer of the death of Miles.

No sooner had he disappeared than the cripple raised his head from the hearth, and, supporting it upon both hands, gazed for several minutes upon the corpse of his tormentor.

"Heaven is just! Heaven is just!" he murmured. "I, too, have sinned: but not like these men. Perhaps I may be permitted to make atonement. My present and past sufferings are sufficient punishment.

"The knife," he added. "I must secure the knife!"

Thrusting his long, bony arm between the panel and the wall, the locksmith succeeded, after repeated efforts, in reaching it.

"It will hang him!" he muttered, in a tone of satisfaction, as he carefully concealed it in his vest.

Sir Barnard Gaston listened with such evident incredulity to the account the assassin gave of his confederate's death, that the guilty wretch began to feel alarmed, and consequently confused in his replies.

"Strange!" said the baronet; "I considered it a mere flesh wound. The blood that stained the napkin was not arterial blood."

"I thought so, too."

"Who was present at his death?"

"Myself."

"Who else?"

"His wife arrived just at the last struggle."

"I understand," said his employer, "you have played your game cleverly, but, as it answers my purpose, I shall not inquire too curiously into your motives. He was a coarse brute, and difficult to deal with. We must now speak on more important matters. The chaise will be here to-night. Beckford, and a couple of fellows he has brought with him from Penswick, will accompany it. The boy once removed, we will settle our last accounts together."

Humphrey Skillet did not exactly like the words. "Last accounts" sounded rather ominously in his ears.

Conscience sometimes whispers and suggests extraordinary things.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

◆

GETTING ON IN THE WORLD.

There are many different ways of getting on in the world; it does not always mean making a great deal of money, or being a great man for people to look up to with wonder. Leaving off a bad habit for a good one, is getting on in the world—to be clean and tidy, instead of dirty and disorderly, is getting on—to be careful and saving, instead of thoughtless and wasteful, is getting on—to be active and industrious, instead of idle and lazy, is getting on—to be kind and forbearing, instead of ill-natured and quarrelsome, is getting on—to work as diligently in the master's absence as in his presence, is getting on—in short, when we see any one properly attentive to his duties, persevering through such difficulties to gain such knowledge as shall be of use to himself and to others, offering a good example to his relatives and acquaintances, we may be sure that he is getting on in the world. Money is a very useful article in its way, but it is possible to get on with small means, for it is a mistake to suppose that we must wait for a good deal of money before we can do anything. Perseverance is often better than a full purse. There are more helps towards getting on than is commonly supposed; many people lag behind or miss the way altogether, because they do not see the simple and abundant means which surround them on all sides; and so it happens that these means are aids which cannot be bought with money. Those who wish to get on in the world must have a stock of patience and perseverence, of hopeful confidence, a willingness to learn, and a disposition not easily cast down by difficulties and disappointments.

◆

Origin of Quarrels.—The sweetest, the most clinging affection is often shaken by the slightest breath of unkindness, as the delicate rings and tendrils of the vine are agitated by the faintest air that blows in summer. An unkind word from one beloved often draws blood from many a heart which would defy the battle-ax of hatred, or the keenest edge of vindictive satire. Nay, the shade, the gloom of the face familiar and dear, awakens grief and pain. These are the little thorns which, though men of a rougher form may make their way through them without feeling much, extremely incommode persons of a more refined turn in their journey through life, and make their travelling irksome and unpleasant.

◆

Selling and Writing Music.—Weber was one day invited to a dinner party by a well-known London music publisher, who had reaped a *little profit* by the publication of his *Oberon*, and whose residence and establishment were on the most splendid scale. On entering the gorgeously furnished drawing-room, our modest German opened his eyes to their fullest extent, and, looking round, sighed softly, at the same time saying to himself, "Ah! I perceive it is better to sell than to write music."

◆

Matrimony.—When bent on matrimony, look more than skin deep for beauty, dive further than the pocket for worth, and search for temper beyond good humor for the moment, remembering it is not always the most agreeable partner at a ball who forms the most amiable partner for life. Virtue, like some flowers, blooms often fairest in the shade.

THE ISLAND.

BY WILLIAM ROSS WALLACE.

I.

Brilliantly, brilliantly glitters my isle
On the breast of a mystical sea,
Whose weird waves are circling for many a mile,
With a soft, sunny dimple and luminous smile,
In an exquisite harmony.

II.

Brilliantly, brilliantly rises the dome
That the elements built over me:
It rings in with mystical splendor my home.
From the oriel window I look at the foam
On the breast of this wonderful sea.

III.

Brilliantly, brilliantly through all the day
Floats around me the music of life:
If a tempest e'er lashes the sea into spray,
In an hour its red wings have flitted away,
And a rainbow has conquered the strife.

IV.

Mournfully, mournfully (this is the wo)
An ominous murmur is heard in the clime:
What is it?—the wave, in its lowliest flow,
Is crumbling my bright, but doomed island below—
It must sink, it must sink in this Ocean of Time!

◆

THE LITTLE CAPTIVES.

BY EMERSON BENNETT.

Among the earliest settlers of western Pennsylvania was a man by the name of Nathan Ashby. He crossed the mountains from the eastward with his family, and fixed his residence in the wilderness at a period when the savages were on peaceful terms with the whites. For two or three years nothing occurred to mar his domestic happiness; and during this time he had succeeded in clearing a considerable tract of land, and getting most of it under cultivation, so that his summer crops gave him an abundance ot winter food. His family at this time consisted of five members—himself, wife and three children—two boys and a girl. The eldest boy was twelve, the second nine, and the little girl seven. On more than one occasion strolling parties of Indians had called at his house, been treated with great kindness, and had gone away with expressions of amity and good will. Up to the very moment when our thrilling narrative properly opens, no fears had been entertained by any of the family that they would be molested by the forest natives, and therefore no precautions had been taken against such a dire event; but some aggressions of the whites had in the meantime provoked the Indians to hostilities, and many an innocent family along the borders was doomed to suffer from their vindictive retaliation.

With these preliminary remarks we shall permit George, the second son of Nathan Ashby, to recount the tragic events which followed, as he was wont to narrate the thrilling story in after years.

"It was about ten o'clock of a beautiful day in summer," said George Ashby, "that I was playing with my little sister Ellen beneath a large old maple, which my father, in clearing his land, had left for shade and ornament in front of our door, when my mother, who had been spinning flax on a foot-wheel just inside of our comfortable cabin, called me in, and bade me take some luncheon to my father and brother, who were at work in a corn-field on the other side of a little hill, nearly half a mile distant from the dwelling.

"'And mind you look out for snakes, George!' added my mother, as she handed me a little willow basket, which my brother had made the winter before; 'for it is only the other day, you know, you ran over a rattlesnake and came near being bit.'

"I smiled at her maternal solicitude—for in the hey-day of giddy youth, secure in our own conceit, we are so apt to consider the anxious warnings of our loving parents mere foolishness. Alas! in seeking to guard me against the only peril she feared, how little did my poor, dear mother dream of the horrible danger that was really impending! And yet, perhaps, some foreshadowing of it fell across her gentle spirit—for after I had taken some half a dozen steps on my errand, she called me back, and said tenderly:

"'Kiss me, George.'

"I pressed my lips to hers; and never while I live shall I forget the sweet, mournful gaze with which her calm, blue eye rested upon me as I withdrew. Oh, that I could behold it again! I would walk the earth to the frigid zone of the north, or the torrid clime of the south, for another single glance from that dear mother's eyes. Ah! woe is me! I saw them then for the last time on earth. I pray God I may see them again beyond the gates of death!

"'Kiss me, too, mamma, for I am going with Georgie to take care of him,' I heard my little fair-haired sister say, in a playful tone, as I turned the corner of the house; and the next minute she was skipping along by my side.

"The nearest course to where my father and brother were at work, lay through a little strip of wood upon the top of the hill I have mentioned; and through this we were carelessly picking our way, and had just got in sight of our friends, who were busy with their hoes down near the edge of another wood, when suddenly we saw a little puff of smoke near them, saw them both stagger and fall, and heard the blended reports of three or four muskets, combined with the appalling yells of as many nearly naked savages, who instantly bounded from their covert and rushed upon their victims.

"All this, I may say, was the work of a moment, and fell upon our unguarded senses with such appalling horror as to completely paralyze us—congeal our young blood—turn us into stone-like statues. I saw all, comprehended all, knew it was so, and yet felt it too horrible to be true. I could not clearly realize the reality of what should be only a wild illusion.

"'Oh, Georgie!' said Ellen, at length, in a low, subdued tone, but which was filled with an expression of horror I shall never forget; 'let us go back to dear mamma.'

"I do not think she knew what she said; for as she spoke her little arms clasped me convulsively, and she sank slowly down in a swoon by my side.

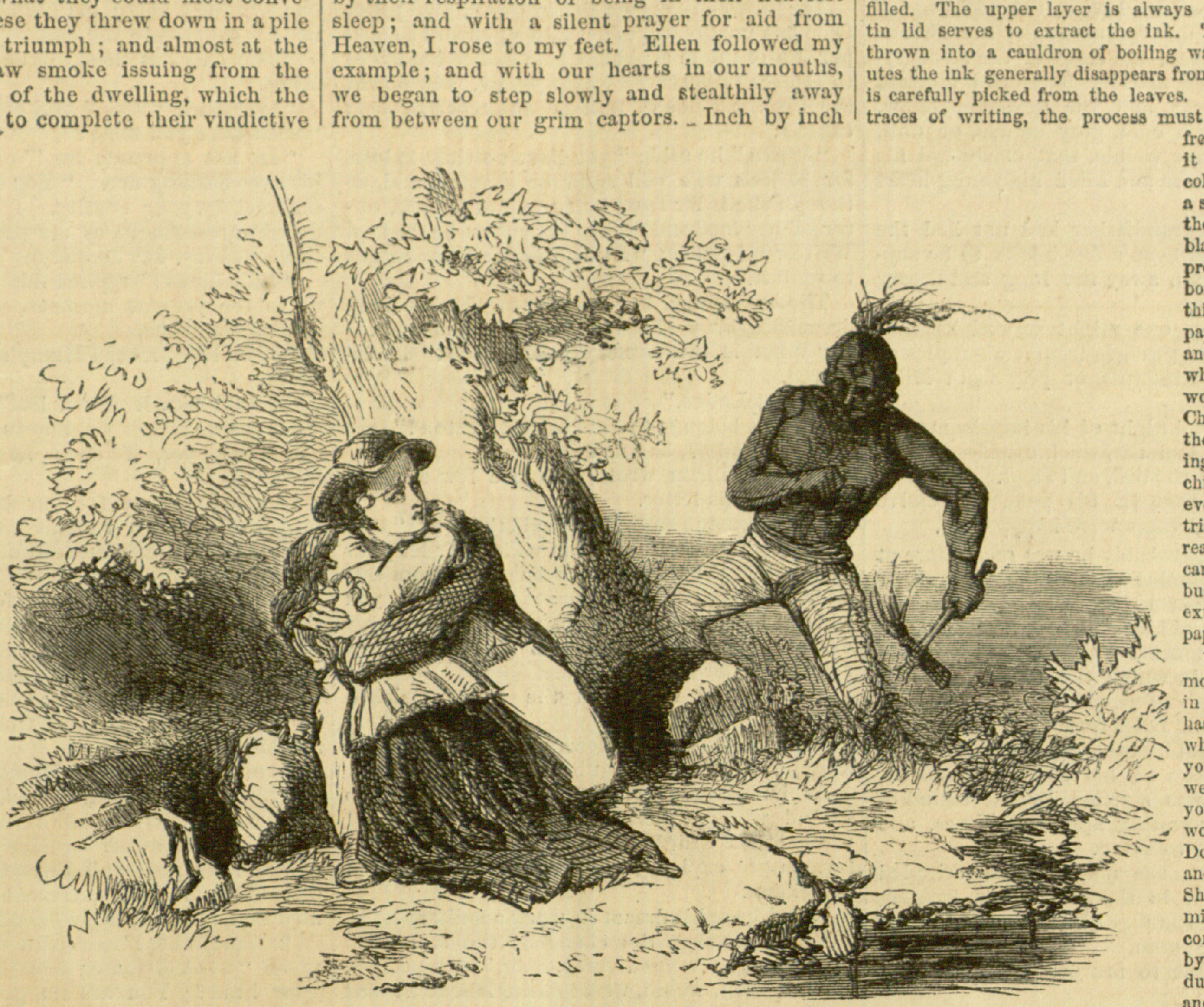
"I stood for a few moments longer, with my eyes rivetted upon the horrible spectacle in the field; and then, scarcely knowing what I did, but with a vague idea of danger to my mother, and that I must fly to her, I mechanically stooped down, raised my unconscious sister, and set off to retrace my steps to the dwelling.

"For some little distance the wood prevented me from seeing the dwelling; and just as I came in sight of it—oh, horror! I heard a wild shriek, which I knew to proceed from my dear mother, and saw a couple of Indians come out and stand idly by the door, apparently in wait for another party within.

"I cannot tell how I felt then. The horror had been made so great and terrible, that my mental powers were benumbed—just as the physical will sometimes become before death, when the pain has been beyond what the system can bear.

"I remember I dropped down on the ground beside my still unconscious sister, and it seemed as if I were waiting to hear my poor dear mother shriek again. But I never did. Her troubles were doubtless all over, and poor little Ellen and I were orphans, with no friends to care for us in the great, wide world.

"While I sat there, looking with a sort of stupefied gaze, I saw some four or five savages come out of the house, each loaded with such articles of plunder as they might have designed taking away with them, or at least from which they might select what they could most conveniently carry. These they threw down in a pile with a wild yell of triumph; and almost at the same moment I saw smoke issuing from the door and windows of the dwelling, which the monsters had fired to complete their vindictive purpose. The smoke was soon followed by tongues of fire, which to my strangely excited fancy appeared to be the tongues of a monstrous serpent that was trying to devour me. In a few minutes the whole building was wrapped in flames, which crackled, roared and danced in harmony with the human fiends around it, and reduced to ashes the mortal remains of my beloved mother.



"While the fire was raging at its greatest fury, and the Indians were busy selecting and dividing their spoils at a safe distance, poor little Ellen opened her eyes by my side, and said:

"'Where are we, Georgie?'

"I could not answer her, for my tongue seemed swollen, my heart in my throat, and my brain parched with fire. She looked and saw the burning cabin, and the sight for the moment seemed to strike her dumb; but the next instant she was upon her feet, and, ere I was aware of it, she was darting forward, shrieking at the top of her voice:

"'My mamma! my dear, dear mamma!'

"She was out of the woods in an instant, and the Indians looked up and saw her. Only for this we might perhaps have escaped; but it was now too late. Ellen saw her mistake as soon as she beheld the Indians, and came darting back to me, wildly exclaiming, as she threw her little arms around my neck:

"'Save me, dear, dear Georgie! Oh, save me from those wicked men!'

"'I cannot!' I replied, with the calmness of despair, as I heard the answering yells of the savages, and saw three of them bounding up the hill in our direction.

"I had no doubt then that we should both be killed in a few minutes, and I thought it was better it should be so, for I had no desire to live any longer. I made no attempt to escape—did not even rise from my seat—but sat there when the Indians came up, with my arms clasped about my sister, who was trembling and groaning with terror.

"'Ugh!' grunted the first Indian that reached us, with a grim smile upon his horribly painted features; and then looking around, and throwing out his arms with a sweep, as if to embrace the whole country, he added: 'More? yes?'

"I understood this to be a question if there were any more of us, and I shook my head and said:

"'No more.'

"The other Indians had now come up and were looking at us; and to these the first one turned, and said a few words in his native tongue; and then, taking hold of little Ellen, he drew her from my arms, saying:

"'Come!'

"At first she was disposed to resist; but when she saw the wicked look the savage gave her, as he brandished his tomahawk before her eyes, she started up, with a cry of terror, and threw her arms around his knees.

"'Come—good—no hurt!' said the savage, in a more kindly tone; and taking her by the hand, he led her away.

"The other Indians motioned me to get up and follow; and as I did so they fell in behind me, and talked and laughed together all the way down the hill, till we joined the others, among whom I beheld the murderers of my dear parents and brother, whom I knew by the scalps of each, which were dangling from their respective girdles.

"The whole group of Indians, comprising about a dozen in number, now held an animated consultation, which lasted about a quarter of an hour; and then two of the three who had captured us, signing us to follow, struck off into the woods, in a northwesterly direction, the others going another way. I now understood we were not to be killed, but to be led captive to their barbarous homes in the wilderness; and I cannot say that this change from what I had so surely expected, gave me any pleasure at first: better death at once, I thought, than such a life.

"But as we walked on, the idea of escape came into my mind, and then for my sister's sake I began to feel more resigned to life. She, poor little thing, was struggling hard to keep up with the long strides of our captors, and crying and sobbing out her heavy grief: mine seemed pent up in me and seething my brain with fire. We were not guarded too closely, and I was allowed to take the hand of Ellen to help her forward; and thus I found an opportunity to whisper to her my hope of escape—a hope founded on hope alone—but which tended in some degree to alleviate her sufferings.

"In the course of a couple of hours one of the Indians shot a deer, on which they made a hearty dinner. They offered us some of the toasted meat, but neither of us had any appetite, and both declined to eat.

"During the journey of the afternoon, we passed a large, hollow tree, that stood upon the banks of a little creek, and I remember looking up at it with a strange interest, though little dreaming then how much it would be connected with the fate of both of us. Then it was for the first time that tears came to my relief, and long rained from my eyes in silence; after which I felt, if not more cheerful, at least that life might still be endured.

"The Indians camped early, and made their supper from the meat they had brought with them. They again offered us a portion, and this time I took and pretended to eat it, but in reality hid it in my bosom against a time of need. They did not bind us, doubtless thinking us too young and small to attempt an escape, but put us together, and stretched themselves down on either side of us, and soon fell asleep. I drew Ellen to me, and whispered in her ear:

"'Do not sleep; but when I rise, get up softly and follow me, without making the slightest noise.'

"Then I laid and planned how to escape, in case we should be pursued after getting clear of the camp—for I had heard enough of Indians to know that they could easily follow a trail through the wildest forest; and then, all of a sudden, the hollow tree beside the little stream occurred to my recollection, and I felt my heart bound from under its oppressive load.

"In about an hour the Indians gave evidence by their respiration of being in their heaviest sleep; and with a silent prayer for aid from Heaven, I rose to my feet. Ellen followed my example; and with our hearts in our mouths, we began to step slowly and stealthily away from between our grim captors. Inch by inch and foot by foot, as it were, we drew further from their dusky sides; and then, when success seemed about to reward our efforts, we both began to tremble and shake so violently, that I do believe, if they had been less sound asleep, we should have aroused them. But Heaven was on our side, and they still slept on.

"In a quarter of an hour we were far enough from the camp to move with freedom; and then I explained to Ellen that we must break our trail by entering the little stream and following it down to the hollow tree, in which I hoped we could so secrete ourselves that our enemies might not find us on the following day.

"My plan succeeded. In two hours we had reached the tree and hid ourselves in its hollow trunk, the entrance to which was about eight feet from the ground. Here, completely worn out with all we had seen, suffered and done, we clasped our arms around each other and fell asleep—nor did we awake till the light of another day was pouring in upon us.

"Fearful of being followed and recaptured, we did not quit our concealment till another night had set in; and well was it for us we did not; for toward noon we heard the steps and voices of Indians passing us—though whether they were those of our late captors in pursuit of us or not, we could not tell.

"The following night, after eating our meat and praying God to guide us, we left our hiding-place and set off in a southerly direction as fast as we could walk. We walked all night—often startled with the cry of some bird, the starting and running of some small game, and the occasional howl of the surrounding wolves; but nothing molested us; and at daylight, completely exhausted, we lay down on the bank of a creek, and fell asleep, locked in each other's arms.

"We were awakened by the barking of a dog, and started up in terror, but only to be the next moment completely thrilled and almost overcome with joy at seeing a white hunter approaching us. We told him our story, and he wept from pure sympathy. He informed us we were within five miles of a settlement; and taking my little sister in his great strong arms, he carried her the most of the way there, I walking by his side.

"Thus were we saved from a painful captivity; but it was a long time ere our grief became so deadened for the love of those we so dearly loved as to enable our hearts to again bound with any feelings of pleasure. We found kind and sympathizing friends, however, among those with whom our lot was cast; and strange to relate, little Ellen in time became the wife of the very man who bore her in his arms to the settlement. He was many years older than herself; but, so far as I know, she never had any cause to regret her choice."

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WHICH TO CHOOSE.

Happy is that human being who, satisfied with sleep, work, food and drink, sheds care and trouble from his soul, as a turtle sheds water off his shell. He may, indeed, miss the high-wrought ecstacies of which only his more sensitive neighbor in happy moments is capable; but as pain in this world is the rule, and happiness the exception, who shall say the former is not the gainer? These jump-up-and-take-another people, can by no means understand *why something good to eat cannot cure the heart-ache*, or, in fact, what there should be in all the world sufficiently provocative of such a disagreeable complaint. Happy oysters! Why waste the alphabet in explanations? Let them quietly fulfill their destiny to slip down the throat of Time without a hitch on the passage. Stay; would I, then, be a human oyster? No; a thousand times, no! By all the dark days that Fate ever boiled down to stifle the breath of a live woman, no! By recollections of hunger and cold, and nothing to do, and no place to do it in—no! In full view of retreating regiments of false friends, every echo of whose footsteps was a nail in my coffin—no! By the intense blue of the summer heavens, which whispers peace to my soul—not "crops"—no! By the sheen of the lake which is not simply a silver dish-cover for fish—no! By the leaf-whisper of trees which I do not always translate apples—no! By "the cattle on a thousand hills," which are not simply beef and pork—no! By the feather-falling snow which alliterateth sinlessness, not skates—no! By the grand old sea anthem whose burden is not "China crape shawls"—no! By the magnetism of a presence, be it friend or stranger—no! By the music of a tone, by the unspoken eloquence of an eye, by all the brief ecstacies I *have* known, and will *yet* know, the "two forty" pulse for *me*, till it stops.

FANNY FERN.

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TRUE religion is not a routine of ceremonies, nor yet the essence of any special creed. The religious sentiment is inherent in every nation of the human race. It gives a beauty of its own to all the external forms of creation, and everything that is true and noble in man's soul springs from its source.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. S. T.—The Chinese method of extracting ink from paper is said to be the best known. The operation is performed in tin kettles, with close lids, and several tin plates, to lie inside in a horizontal position. First, a single fold of paper, above it a layer of acid plants, resembling our sorrel, covers the bottom of the kettle; then a fold of written paper, over which is laid the tin slider, then a fold of paper, followed by vegetable acid, paper, tin-plate, paper, &c., until the square kettle has been filled. The upper layer is always paper, as the flat tin lid serves to extract the ink. The kettle is then thrown into a cauldron of boiling water. In ten minutes the ink generally disappears from the paper, which is carefully picked from the leaves. If still stained by traces of writing, the process must be repeated with fresh leaves; and when it appears all of one color, it is washed in a saponaceous ley, and then with water, until blanched. It is not probable that such labor would "pay" in this country, where paper is so abundant and so cheap, and where the price of work is so high. In China labor is about the cheapest thing going, and even small children are put to every possible industrial use, for which reason the Celestials can well afford to busy themselves in extracting ink from paper.

W. A. H.—Your mother is quite right in refusing to let you hastily marry a man who is younger than yourself; and even were he older than you are, her policy would be the right one. Do as she says; wait, and do nothing rashly. She may change her mind and give her consent to the match, by and by, if you are dutiful, and discreet, and obedient to her wishes.

PHILADELPHIA MECHANIC.—This is a bashful gentleman, indeed. He says that, when he is in the company of young ladies, he cannot find words with which to express his thoughts, even when he has any thoughts, which he generally has not. Often, at a place of public assemblage, he continues, a lady will convey to him a delicate hint that she would not object to his offering to escort her home, but he dares not take the hint because he knows he cannot "keep her in conversation as we go along," and periods of silence will occur that to a bashful man are terrible. In fact, his tongue is paralyzed, and he feels like a man who is going either to pop the question or be hanged. Now, we might say to this young gentleman, as we have said to other youths similarly afflicted, that bashfulness is generally a manifestation of morbid self-love. The bashful man thinks too much about himself, fears that he will not appear to advantage, and is therefore embarrassed. But our correspondent does not ask for an explanation of his malady, but for its cure. Reflection and practice are the remedies for this complaint. Let him consider that young ladies are as solicitous to please young gentlemen as young gentlemen are to please young ladies. Let him also know that the wish to please is sure to be apparent, however awkwardly it may be manifested, and that the girls are rather pleased than offended with a bashful beau, for his confusion is a kind of homage to their power. Lastly, let him embrace every opportunity to frequent the society of ladies, and never leave it to *them* to hint the desirableness of an escort home, but promptly offer his services.

M. L.—You need not be afraid of paying too much attention to the meaning of words during your scholastic course, or at any time thereafter. As to the language which you should pay most attention to, we unhesitatingly recommend the English. In our opinion it is the master tongue of the world. Among the languages of modern Europe, specious but subordinate pretensions have been advanced to cadence, terseness, or dextrous ambiguity of insinuation, while the sober majesty of the English tongue stood aloof and disdained a competition on the ground of such inferior particularities. We even think that we have erred in regard to Greek and Latin. Our sense of the inestimable benefit we have reaped from the treasures of taste and science, which they have handed down to us, has led us into an extravagance of reverence for them. They have high intrinsic merit, without doubt, but it is a bigotted gratitude and an unweighed admiration which induces us to prostrate the character of the English tongue before their altars. Every language can furnish to genius casually a forcible expression; and a thousand turns of neatness and delicacy may be found in most of them; but we confidently assert, that, in that which should be the first object of all language, *precision*, the English tongue surpasses them all; while in richness of coloring and extent of power, it is exceeded by none, unequalled by any.

ISABEL.—You are doubtless right in supposing that the remote ancestors of the Parisian belles "set the fashions" in antiquity. Athenæus, a writer of great authority in such matters, pronounces the ancient Gallic women the most beautiful of all the barbarians, and old Roman writers also often refer to the costumes of those barbarian belles in terms of admiration. But those exquisite antique divinities were not the useless dolls which some of their modern descendants have become; they united the useful with the agreeable, and the executive with the ornamental, in high degrees. Ammianus Marcellinus, an old chronicler who wrote from positive knowledge, says: "All the Gauls are tall, fair-skinned, golden-haired, and terrible for the fierceness of their eyes. They are greedy of quarrels, great braggarts, and insolent. A whole troop of strangers could scarcely resist a single one of them in a brawl, *and particularly if he were assisted by his stalwart, blue-eyed wife, who, gnashing her teeth, distending her neck, brandishing her large, snowy arms, and kicking up her heels betimes, will deliver fisticuffs like bolts from the twisted strings of a catapult.*" A belle of that description must have been exceedingly handy to have in the house, in the times when desperate encounters were things of daily occurrence in every neighborhood.

J. C. M.—Three of the ladies mentioned in the book entitled, "Women of the South," write for the LEDGER, namely, Mrs. Southworth, Anna Cora Ritchie, and Marion Harland. Mary Forrest, the authoress of the work, is also one of our contributors. The book is elegantly got up by the publishers, Messrs. Derby and Jackson, is expensively illustrated, and sold at $9 a copy.

A CONSTANT READER.—"A lady-friend and myself," says this correspondent, "exchanged rings. Afterwards the lady requested hers back, and when I asked for *mine*, she confessed to having given it away to a gentleman friend. Should I give back hers before she recalls *mine*?" We think not; she has no right to ask it till she has done the proper thing as to your own.

R. D. C.—Whether or not it is sufficient cause for breaking an engagement when a lady accepts from *another* suitor his miniature, is for you to judge. Of course it was an improper thing; and if you "express your views" to her, she may do all you wish—she certainly will if she truly loves you. She may have only made a mistake through ignorance.

A. F. says, "A young man proposed marriage to me. I asked a short time for deliberation. He immediately commenced paying attention to another lady—what shall I do?" Let him go ahead, and take no notice of him whatever. He must be a mean-spirited and ignorant popinjay, who has no idea how to treat a woman with proper courtesy.

L. N. says, "I am visited by a young man who throws out *hints* about loving me, and is angry because I don't take them. Am I not right in the course I have adopted?" You are perfectly right not to understand his *hints*. If he is not man enough to speak his real sentiments, he has not yet had a call to be a husband.

TYPO.—It is no more advisable for a "compositor" to chew tobacco, than it is for any other person to do so. Chewing is a slavish and dirty habit, and you will be sure to regret having placed yourself under its dominion, when too confirmed in it to be willing to disenthral yourself.

M. AND H.—If a young man who is engaged to be married keeps on drinking to intoxication, the young lady to whom he is engaged should certainly discard him. She would be insane to marry him under such circumstances.

P. M.—Strict integrity and industry would "raise a young man's reputation sooner than anything else."

COLONEL.—The battle of Tours was fought on the eleventh day of October, A. D. 732. It was the great death-struggle between Christian civilization and Saracenic barbarism for the empire of the world, and has therefore been considered an event of the highest significance. The Christian hosts were commanded by Karl Martel (or Charles the Hammer—a name given him for his prodigious prowess and crushing blows in battle,) and the Saracens by Abd-el-Rahman, a chieftain of great talent, courage and experience. Up to that point, the Moslem hosts had swept the world, victorious over all opponents, and their proud chieftains insolently boasted that the crescent should wave from every church-spire in Christendom, and that the followers of Christ should become hewers of wood and drawers of water for the beloved of Mahomet. Flushed with victory and laden with incomputable spoil, Abd-el-Rahman led his countless myrmidons to pluck from the Christians their richest treasures, collected in the Basilica of St. Martin of Tours—a shrine in which the profoundest veneration of the church was also centred. The cupidity and fanaticism of the Moslems combined to make them fiercely desire the pillage and overthrow of this illustrious sanctuary. They therefore took their way thither, and Karl and his shaggy giants of the North met them near Tours. For eight days the armies were in sight of each other, slight skirmishes keeping alive the ardor of either host, until at length, on that memorable eleventh of October, at earliest dawn, with one loud shout of Allah-Akbar, (God is great,) the wild Moslem horsemen charged like a tornado upon their foe. The Koran and the Bible—Islamism and Christianity—met in that terrible shock. Each antagonism put forth its best efforts, and fought its bravest and its fiercest. All day long the impetuous charges of the fierce horsemen were incessantly renewed, and all day long the brave Franks withstood their onsets without flinching a hair. Abd-el-Rahman's ringing battle-cry unceasingly pealed above the horrid din of battle, and Karl's ponderous battle-axe fell incessantly upon the turbaned heads of his foes. About four o'clock in the afternoon, the Saracens were thrown into confusion by an attack on their camp and in their rear, and then Karl ordered his iron legions to advance in solid phalanxes. They obeyed, and bore down all opposition. In vain did Abd-el-Rahman rage; his fiery horsemen went down before the Christian warriors like twigs before the avalanche. Three hundred and seventy-five thousand Saracens fell that day, but only fifteen hundred Franks. Europe had driven back Asia, and once more triumphant o'er the Crescent waved the Cross.

TOM TULIP, who announces himself to be a most affectionate man, says—"I have a *very great affection* for a young lady, but cannot get her to reciprocate it, on account of my being in the habit of chewing tobacco. What would you advise me to do, abandon the tobacco, or the girl, or both?" If you could hesitate long enough to put the girl for whom you have *a very great affection* in one scale, while you put tobacco in the other, we do not consider you worth wasting advice upon;—you are not the man to stick to a good resolution, though you should form it; and such a man has no business to ask a woman to marry him in order that he may make her miserable, as he certainly would.

H. L. wants to know what we think of young ladies who stand at their street doors talking in a loud tone of voice; and if it would not better they should finish their conversation before leaving the parlor, and not keep their friends standing in the cold, giving their neighbors the benefit of their chat? Young ladies might do a worse thing than that, and "neighbors" must be very churlish, who object to seeing young people happy. Still, the ladies undoubtedly would do quite as well, and appear much better, not to talk in a loud voice at the street-doors. Such conduct, though innocent, verges slightly on the vulgar

B. R.—We have seen it stated that "an excellent cure for chilblains before they are broken," may be secured by applying the following recipe: Wash the parts affected in water as hot as you can well bear, and, after drying them well with a clean cloth, rub them with spirits of hartshorn before the fire, keeping them warm afterwards. This, says the author of the recipe, is best done before going to bed.

G. Y. G., who is a clerk with a salary of two hundred a year, wants to know if he "ought to marry a nice girl whom he loves, or would it be fair to ask her to wait three years till he can go away and try to make money?" That depends altogether upon how well able *both* of you are to begin life *economically*. If you are not prepared to do this, you can submit the other alternative to the lady and abide by her decision.

N. N.—This young man says, "My father, whom I have never disobeyed, wishes me, while loving one girl, to marry another for whom I can have only feelings of hatred. Shall I do it?" No. Tell your father kindly and respectfully that you cannot consent to make *her* life wretched as well as your own. He will undoubtedly see and ultimately approve the wisdom and manliness of such a course on your part.

CINCINNATI MERCHANT.—Should a gentleman, on meeting lady-friends in the street, walk beside them without asking permission? Certainly not; it might be a serious inconvenience and interruption to do so. As to your other question, "Should a gentleman, on meeting a lady-friend about dark, offer to accompany her home?" we answer yes, if he pleases to do so; but he is not necessitated to be so gallant.

BOSS.—You say that your "boss" gave you a cigar the other day, and want to know if you should offer him one in return. That depends upon the kind of man he is. We could not pretend to judge on *that* point without knowing more than your question implies. The general rule is, however, that an inferior should not offer such courtesies to a superior.

MINERAL.—No, sir; no benefit could be derived from a *moderate* use of arsenic, and it is not the "*excessive* indulgence merely" that is hurtful. Besides, it is with that as with ardent spirits or tobacco—no one addicted to its use will admit that *he himself* uses it immoderately. Therein lies the danger of *beginning* to tamper with such things.

C. D.—If for any reason you have decided that the man who has interested you, you can never love and respect as a wife should love and respect her husband, it is clearly your duty to decline his offers. It is not necessary that you should wound his self-love by stating the reason. Make your declination so decided, however, that it cannot be mistaken.

TARRYTOWN puts the following question: "If a visitor is stopping at your house, is it *your* place to propose retiring for the night, or that of the guest?" One of the first pleasures of hospitality is perfect freedom on both sides as to personal habits. Therefore, if either wishes to retire, *either* may *courteously* propose to do so.

A MOTHER.—As a general thing, a cold bath is not proper for an infant in winter. That is a question, however, which only your family physician, who understands your child's constitution, can intelligently decide. Some children, and even some adults, can *never* take a *cold* bath without injurious results.

MAY.—It is not proper for a gentleman who is *only* a friend to put his arm about your waist. If he desires only your *friendship*, give him *that*. When he asks for *yourself*, it is time enough to allow him to take you.

A. AND L.—The best course for you to pursue to make a young gentleman you admire notice you, is to *let him alone;* gentlemen prefer to make such advances themselves.

KATE.—Is it proper for a gentleman to address a lady while dancing with her? Yes, of course; it is to be presumed that she would not be dancing with an improper person.

MEHITABLE.—A teacher who gives one scholar bad marks, and neglects to do so to others who are equally guilty, does very wrong, if he knows they *are* equally guilty; but perhaps he does *not* know it.

CHARLEY.—If a gentleman invite a lady living in another city to attend a ball in the place where he resides, it is not only his duty to pay her travelling expenses, but he should also go for and return with her.

W. C.—If the lovely girl, for whose hand you have a rival, and whom you have asked to marry you, will give you no decisive answer, you should wait till she does decide, or else do without her decision.

INQUIRER.—A young man should not visit a lady with a view to matrimony till his beard is grown; by that time he may possibly know his own mind on such subjects.

P. S. O.—Of course it is wrong for one journal to copy choice original articles from another without credit to both paper and author, when each is known to be entitled to it.

COON.—If you don't want a young lady to say that you are in love with her, absent yourself from her company that she may have no ground for such a remark.

J. C. C.—When a young lady, who has owned that she loved you, now treats you with sneers and contempt, you should let her alone significantly.

JULIA.—In order to learn how to dye a scarlet, or deep red, or brown, you should apply to some intelligent professional dyer.

CHARLES.—When a person is introduced to another, he should rise and bow, but *hand-shaking* may be optional with him.

⁂ *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*